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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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The Fatherland Series.

Christmas.

From the German.

PHILADELPHIA:
LUTHERAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.
1875.

Christmas:

A

STORY FOR MY FRIENDS.

BY

FRANZ HOFFMAN.

From the German.

BY H. HARBAUGH, D. D.

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CHRISTMAS!

CHAPTER I.

BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY!

On a dark day in November the first flakes of snow, like white down, circled through the air, silently covering streets and roofs as with a bright white veil. Little Jonathan Monkenwyk, a gentle, flaxen-haired, blue-eyed boy seven years old, stood at the window, and looking out through the large clear panes, watched the whirling flakes as they fell in countless numbers, and yet so silently and softly from the heavy skies to the earth.

The ever-varying, ever new play of the millions of light, loosely adhering crystals, seemed greatly to delight the thoughtful mind of the boy; for he did not become weary of feeding his eyes on the scene. Again and again he would fix his eyes on some very large flakes of snow, high, high up in the air, and follow them down through the chaos of whirling masses till with their fellows they softly nestled on the roof or in the street, thus losing themselves in the multitudes that had already fallen.

Suddenly he clapped his hands with a new joy, turned away from the window into the well-warmed, comfortable, and somewhat splendid parlor, and with jubilant feelings cried out aloud: "Mother, guess of what the snow reminds me! O, what joy! Why did I not think of it before!"

"Of what, my child?" asked the mother, a stately, beautiful woman, dressed in heavy silk—as she cast a smiling glance toward the boy. "Of what does the snow remind you?"

"No, no, you must guess it, mother! It is easy; you can easily guess it!"

"Well, if I must guess, it may remind you of the fine sleighing of last year which gave you so much pleasure. Do you remember how merrily the bells rang, and how we glided, swiftly as a bird on the wing, over the smooth snow-covered road?"

"Yes, that was fine, wonderfully fine!" answered the boy. "The sun shone so brightly, the heavens were so blue and pure, the air sparkled with icy particles brilliant like diamonds, and the twigs of the trees glittered with crystal frost which had gathered on them during the previous night. Yes, yes, that was beautiful; but you have not guessed right! You must try again mother!"

"Very good; it may remind you of your skating with Peter Hemskerk on the frozen, glassy lake? I know you enjoyed that very much; although you always returned home half frozen."

"No, mother, no, that is not it! It was very fine, I know, to skim on the lake, and dart right through among the crowd of well-dressed people who whirled on their skates over the smooth ice; and there was much hearty laughing when here and there one tumbled over. And Peter is a good fellow, for he drew me nicely after him on the little sled. But you have not guessed right, mother; you must try again."

"Is it possible! Then it is not so easily guessed. You have given me a hard riddle to solve," said his mother, smilingly. "Perhaps the snow reminds you

of the large snow-man which Peter made in the yard?"

"Heyday! That was a fine snow-man; especially when Peter had put on his head the large three-masted bonnet of red pasteboard, and made for him a large red mouth, and a monstrous moustache, and such awfully large eyes, and put in his face a red turnip for a nose! Yes, he looked very funny, mother; but—you have not hit on the right thing yet!"

"Then I must confess myself beaten, Jonathan!" said Mrs. Monkenwyk. "I can think of nothing else of which the falling snow could remind you."

"But the principal thing, mother, the principal thing! Just remember! No, I can't tell you—you must guess it!"

Mrs. Monkenwyk had long ago seen in what direction Jonathan's thoughts were running, as any one might have judged from the calm, stolen smiles which played on her rosy lips; but Jonathan did not observe it. Thus held at bay, he could finally no longer retain his secret, for it nearly burst his heart; and springing from the settee, at the window, into the arms of his mother, he exclaimed aloud:

"Christmas! Christmas! Christmas! That now in four weeks it will be Christmas, and that the Christmas-tree will be lighted up, and that the Christkindlein will bring me beautiful presents—of *this* the snow, whirling down without, reminds me; for surely this is the pleasantest thing the winter can bring us. Christmas, mother! Hey! how strange you could not at once guess this!"

"Who can think of everything?" replied his mother with the same stolen smile. "And who knows whether the Christkindlein will visit us this

year? If the children during the year have not been pious and obedient, he will pass by the house, and hold tight the bag which contains all the Christmas blessings, and which he is wont to scatter over the tables! Who knows, who knows, Jonathan, how you will fare this Christmas?"

"O mother, you are jesting with me!" replied the boy, laughing, and hid his face in her bosom. "I am not now as simple as in former years! Now I go to school, and know what Christkindlein it is that furnishes for us the Christmas table! You are it, mother, you and father!"

"I, and father," repeated his mother; and her mild, tender countenance assumed an earnest expression. "I and father! Very true! But Jonathan, since you are so smart, as you say you are, you have, no doubt, also reflected from whose hand at last all good gifts come—all, the great and the little, which are enjoyed by us, that we may live and be happy? How, my child?"

"Yes, mother, I know it! Every gift comes from God! This our school-master taught us; and you, too, have long ago told me."

"True, Jonathan! and so God has also given us His Son, the Saviour of the world, through whom every blessing, and all our joy, has come to us, and none the less also the joy and the blessings which good children feel in expectation of holy Christmas. Both myself and your father, are only the instruments which the Christkindlein employs; and so you see, Jonathan, that it is at last none other than the Saviour of the world, that spreads the table for children on the glad festival, and kindles the variegated lights on the Christmas-tree."

Jonathan listened attentively, reflected a short

time on the words of his mother, and then earnestly said: "You are right, mother; and I will never again laugh when you talk to me of the Christkindlein, for I now see that I am not yet as wise as I thought I was."

"Well for you will it be, my child, if you shall always think thus," answered his mother; "for all the wisdom of man is nothing but ignorance, or knowledge in part, in the eyes of the Lord, who alone is the beginning and end of all wisdom."

Jonathan returned to the window, looked out again into the falling snow, and gave himself up to the flow of his own thoughts, which still led him on toward the gradually approaching happy festival of Christmas. In imagination he already saw before him the Christmas-tree covered with a hundred lights, and all kinds of sugar devices, and all the various beautiful things which were the end of his wishes and longings. Nothing did he desire more than a mill, with regular wheels, turning when sand or water is poured on it, with flour chests and round mill stones, with miller and mill-boy in white flowered coats; and, besides this, a pretty stable with oxen and cows, and one with four brown horses in it, a ladder wagon with wool-sacks on it going toward town to market, and a poultry yard with chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys and peacocks—in short, just such a mill as the one he had visited with his mother the previous summer, where he had been four full weeks to breathe the fresh country air that he might the sooner recover from the effects of the measles by which he had been confined to the house during nearly half the spring. To possess such a mill in miniature was his greatest wish, together with many other

wishes which might sound very extravagant to such as did not know how rich Jonathan's parents were, and besides, that they had only this one child, whom very naturally they loved with great tenderness.

Mr. Monkenwyk, senior, the father of Jonathan, was a wealthy commercial merchant in Amsterdam. He owned a large three-story house on the market place, with side and back buildings, stored with large quantities of every kind of wares, coffee, sugar, spices from distant India, and all kinds of other products from strange lands; he had three trading ships on the sea; even the mill, where Jonathan and his mother, in the preceding summer, had spent such pleasant days, belonged to him; in his counting-room ten clerks were employed, and a chief book-keeper attended to his settlements —and as thus, Mr. Monkenwyk had money in abundance, it may be well believed that he regarded no expense, when the object was to prepare for his only son a happy Christmas. Only, Jonathan must know nothing of what is doing before Christmas has come, that he may the more enjoy the surprise; and hence his mother always gave a very doubtful look whenever he spake of his wishes, and expressed all kinds of guesses and fears in reference to them, so that Jonathan, the nearer Christmas approached, only became more doubtful whether even a single one of his wishes would be fulfilled.

Very often did he speak of the matter to Peter Hemskerk. Peter was the son of the coachman, and although he was several years older than Jonathan, he was his school-companion, and his best friend; for Peter was full of kindness, and

friendliness, and withal a skillful, and dexterous youth, who was ever ready to please his young Master, gathering his wishes from his very eyes. Did Jonathan wish to take a walk in the free open country, Peter walked with him ; did he wish to have a bird which he had heard sing in the grove, or whose beautiful feathers had attracted his fancy, Peter caught it for him ; in short, Peter was Jonathan's factotum and prime minister, and whatever lay on Jonathan's heart he entrusted without reserve to his faithful comrade, the honest Peter.

The same was the case with the wishes, hopes, and fears in regard to the coming Christmas, and the presents it was likely to bring.

"What do you think Peter," asked Jonathan once more, and for the hundredth time, the day before Christmas—"will the mill come or not ?"

"I do not know," replied Peter, laughing slyly to himself. "Mr. Monkenwyk has confided nothing of the kind to me."

"Ah, Peter, surely you know more than you are willing to tell me ! Have you seen it—the mill ?"

"With no eye have I seen it, Jonathan ! You are a funny boy. Do you think that your father, the Herr Monkenwyk, would entrust his secrets to me, an insignificant youth, the son of his coachman ?"

"O, be still Peter, I do not mean that. But you are so shrewd, and see everything that is going on ; and surely you have also seen the mill !"

Peter shook his head.

"Nothing of it, Peter ? Not any part of it ?"

Peter shook his head again.

"Not even the wheels ? Or the mill stones ?"

Peter shook his head still more firmly.

"Ah, Peter you are good for nothing!" cried Jonathan, and was near breaking out in tears.

But Peter laughed, drew him on his lap, and said: "you are a funny boy, Jonathan. Do you see; if even I knew everything that is to be given you at Christmas, I would not tell you the smallest word of it. And why? Because you would not have so much pleasure in it if you knew beforehand what the Christkindlein would bring. Patience, Jonathan!"

"But if I get no mill, I will not care anything for the whole of Christmas!" said Jonathan.

"Do you see! now you have spoken like a foolish Jonathan," answered Peter. "We must be grateful for all things. What if I should speak as you do? Think of this Jonathan. The Christkindlein brings nothing at all to me; at best, perhaps, a few nuts and apples; and see! I am still satisfied. Then be a wise, good, and sensible Jonathan, and not an ungrateful, murmuring boy, or you shall see that I will be angry with you, and will have nothing more to do with you."

"Oh Peter, you must not speak so," cried Jonathan, quite changed all at once, and frightened by this threat, which was not at all intended as such. "No, Peter, you must remain friendly toward me, for if I actually get the mill, with whom shall I carry on grinding but with you? No, Peter, I am the miller, and you shall be the mill-boy! That will be fun, Peter—when the wheels turn, and the mill clatters klip, klap, and the stones whirl around, and we pour in the grain —Peter, I cannot imagine anything finer than that!"

"Why, you can play with Philip, Jonathan,"

replied Peter, balancing the boy on his knee—"with Philip Mappel. He suits you better than I, for he is always dressed in good clothes, and is the nephew of the chief book-keeper, whilst I am only the coachman's son. Play with Philip Mappel, Jonathan!"

"No, I do not wish to! Not with Philip," repeated the boy and crept more fondly and closely up to Peter.

"And why not, Jonathan? He also is always friendly toward you, and gives you sweet-meats and candies as often as he sees you."

"Yes, that is all true; but see, Peter, I still do not love him as I do you."

"Why so, Jonathan? you must have some reason for this?"

"A reason, Peter? yes, certainly I have a reason!"

"What is it? What kind of a reason, Jonathan!"

"I have more than one reason," replied the boy, thoughtfully. "First, Philip does not play as pretty as you—not by far. Then, when I go walking with him he is soon tired; and climb like you he cannot, nor can he catch a bird; and in winter on the ice he is soon cold, so that he does not hold out half an hour; and then, do you see, Peter—all this is still no matter—but he despises poor people, whose clothes are not as good as his, and this is the worst! He has no good heart, Peter, and he is only friendly toward me because my father is rich and has much money, and because his uncle is chief book-keeper."

"Why, Jonathan, this is foolish stuff which you are talking! Then you also think that I am

friendly to you only because I am a son of your father's coachman ?"

"No, no, you stupid Peter, that I do not think at all," answered Jonathan. "You know well enough that this is not so. You are good to me because you have a good heart. You are good to all, also to poor people; but Philip is not. Do you see! only lately we met a little girl quite poorly clad, who asked us for alms, and she looked so miserable and hungry, that I felt pity for her; but Philip spoke harshly to the poor child, and when she did not immediately go away, but with tears in her eyes extended her hand, he lifted his walking cane, and would have struck the poor child if I had not prevented him. I gave the child my purse, and then ——" Jonathan himself broke off his story, and laughed aloud.

"Well, what then," asked Peter, "What did you then ?"

"Ah, Peter, that was fun," continued Jonathan. "It had displeased me that Philip acted so badly toward the poor, little, shivering beggar-child, and then something came into my head, and I asked Philip whether he had not some candies ; and then he drew a large paper full from his pocket and offered them to me. I took them, but instead of eating them, I called the poor little girl to me, and told her to spread her apron, and poured all the candies into her lap, perhaps thirty or forty, Peter; and then you should have seen the sour face which Philip made when the little girl ran away with his candies ! It is worth a laugh, Peter, you may believe it."

Then Jonathan laughed anew, and Peter joined in ; but soon Peter again grew serious and said :

"True, it was not proper for Philip to threaten the little girl with his cane; but you see that, toward you, he was still immediately kind, and gave you what you asked of him. Thus you have no reason to be displeased with him."

"Nor am I exactly angry with him, Peter," answered Jonathan, "but I do not love so well to play with him as I do with you. Do you see, Peter, if I were poor, Philip would not be kind toward me, but would treat me in the same manner as he did the little girl; but you would not—you would ever remain my faithful Peter. This I know you would do, and if I had not a penny in my pocket; and for this reason, Peter, for this reason, I love you."

"It may all be as you say, Jonathan," replied Peter, thoughtfully. "It may all be, but God forbid that Philip may ever be put to this test, to show whether your words are true. Moreover you are, after all, not so dumb a Jonathan as I had thought, but on the contrary a very cunning and sly Jonathan; and because you love me as you say, we will let matters stand as they are between us, and will remain good friends, and play with one another as before. But the mill, Jonathan, only put that out of your head, for nothing will come of it!"

"It would be a pity if it should turn out that you are right," answered the boy. "But if it must be so, then, Peter, we will still not let it spoil our dear Christmas. If it is no mill, then it will be something else. To-morrow, Peter, we shall know! Hey day! to-morrow about this time,—to-morrow my heart will be glad! And you also will be in the joy, Peter. I have already asked mother that

it may be so, and she has promised me that she will call you in when the gift business comes off. If it were only to-morrow evening now, Peter !"

"You must have patience, Jonathan—one day and one night are soon past," said Peter. "And now, away ! I have yet some work to do. Go to your bed, and pray well before you sleep, and dream something pleasant, that to-morrow you may be fresh and in good spirits. Good night, Jonathan."

"Good night, Peter," responded the boy, and went.

All night long he dreamed of wind-mills and of water-mills, and also heard the hearty clattering, klip, klap ; only it was not the mills that clattered but the window shutter at his sleeping room at which the cold north-west wind was prying. Still, Jonathan slept till broad day light ; and now at length the day had come to which he had looked longingly forward for weeks past.

This day, it is true, passed slowly enough for him ; much more slowly than any other day in the year ; and it seemed to the impatient boy as if it would never come to an end, although it is in fact one of the shortest days in the year. Still the day at length passed away ! one hour gave place to another, the forenoon to the afternoon, and at length the shadows in the corners of the room told that twilight was gradually coming in. Now Jonathan was glad, and felt an inward jubilation ! At last the servant brought a light into the room, as it had become quite dark without ; and Jonathan already thought that the light, as it entered, was the first gleam from the Christmas-tree, till by his father he was taught some-

thing else ! Mr. Monkenwyk had come in, mainly, in order to confine Jonathan, for half an hour before the distribution of the gifts, in a darkroom, according to a custom kept up in the family from remote times. Thus, when the children should come forth from the dark room into the bright Christmas-chamber, the brilliancy of a hundred lights would strike them with double power, and to effect this increase of the surprise the arrangement was made.

At the same time in this confinement there was for Jonathan at least, another object. He was alone—darkness was around him—his spirit was awake in this anticipation of the coming joy—and hence the minutes seemed to creep along like snails.

He reflected !

This was the first Christmas which he had spent with a full consciousness of what it signified ; for the former Christmas days seemed to have passed away more like dreams, because he had been too young to comprehend the significance of the beautiful festival. But now it was otherwise. He knew *why* Christmas was celebrated ; and besides, the beating joy in his heart, he felt a deep inward gratitude toward that Saviour to whom he was indebted for this joy.

"Yes, yes," he murmured to himself, "I will always be right good and pious throughout the whole year that I may be worthy of the blessedness with which our dear Christmas festival rejoices us children ; and mother shall never again have reason to complain of me."

"Excellent good thought," said a deep-toned voice. "But listen Jonathan, what you have

thus vowed to yourself is not enough, you must do more."

"What shall I do? And who are you!" asked Jonathan, somewhat frightened, although he was not really afraid, for he was in the house of his parents, where certainly no evil could befal him.

"Who am I?" repeated the voice, hollow and low—"I am Knecht Ruprecht, who on Christmas evening make glad the good children, and put the bad boys in my sack, and carry them away! Now, you know me! Are you afraid of me?"

"No," answered Jonathan, firmly. "No, I am not afraid, for to my knowledge I have done no evil."

"That is not sufficient!" replied Knecht Ruprecht with a threatening warning voice, "It is not enough to do no evil, we must also have the good firm will to do some good! Have you this will, Jonathan?"

"The will I have," answered the boy, "but a resolution I have hitherto not made. But from now I will so resolve."

"What resolution?" asked Knecht Ruprecht.

"To do all the good I can," answered the boy. "And in any case I will vow that no Christmas evening shall pass over without doing some good, and cause joy in some one. This is my determination, and I will never either forget, or break this vow!"

"Good, Jonathan! this is a resolution well-pleasing to God; and for the sake of your pious resolution your Christmas joy shall no longer be disturbed. God bless you! We will see each other again!"

A blue flame blazed up, and was suddenly ex-

tinguished again, and by the faint light which it shed, Jonathan beheld a large form, which seemed to have enormous horns on its head, and then all was dark again ; and Knecht Ruprecht vanished as noiselessly as he had come !

" Strange," thought Jonathan, " that I did not know him ! Could it have been father ? Yet this is not possible for he is engaged in the room. Or is it Mr. Mappel, the chief book-keeper ? No, it cannot be, for he has long since gone home ! I cannot guess it ; and yet his voice, though somewhat disguised, sounded as familiar to me as if I had heard it daily from year to year. Peter it was, after all. Yet, no ! Peter is not much larger than myself, whilst the horns of this Knecht Ruprecht reached to near the ceiling of the room. " Well, no matter," he continued,—" It may have been who it will, my promise I will keep as long as I live, as I solemnly vowed to him and myself !"

Whilst he was muttering these words to himself, a stream of light in the same moment, shone brightly through the dark chamber, so that Jonathan was frightened and near believing that he was seeing a supernatural appearance. But when he looked more carefully he saw that the light came in through a small crevice in the door of the side room, and thus the riddle of the strange apparition was explained in the simplest and most natural manner.

" Father is kindling the lights on the Christmas-tree !" mused Jonathan in his heart. " Now soon the bell will jingle, and I will be called into the Christmas room, where the tree is !"

For a moment curiosity urged him strongly to creep to the door and look slyly through the

opening if perchance he might see what is going on; but he soon quelled this inquisitive feeling, and it was very well that he did so, for now the bell rung in loud tones, and wide, wide open flew the door, and a flood of light, like a sea of flame, rolled from that spacious Christmas room; and now, with a shout of rapture and overwhelming joy, Jonathan rushed forward into the middle of the clear, bright, glittering sea of light!

Shall I tell you and describe what it was that Christkindlein had brought for the lucky Jonathan? The beautiful and refreshing were there in rich abundance; for I have already told you that Jonathan's parents were very wealthy people, that he was not only their only son, but also an active, obedient, pious boy, in whom any parent would have had pleasure even if he had not been an only son.

Well, a mill was there! Only it was far, far more beautiful than Jonathan had imagined or desired—a mill with three large water-wheels and three sets of mill-stones, a mill that clattered in so lively a manner that it could be heard in the upper story of the house when it was set in motion below, a very regularly made mill, with real miniature mill-stones, which would grind grains, and with actual running water which, flowing down from a large reservoir, turned the wheels, and which afterwards, when the reservoir was empty, by means of a small hand pump, could very easily be pumped back again; a mill with a poultry yard, with cow and horse stables, with meadows and a small woods; a mill with mill-wagon and mill-bags in a large storage house in which were deposited three full pecks of corn,

which were in future to be ground. In short, it was a real pleasure only to see it! But now to be the owner of this mill—to express such a joy Jonathan found no words! He stood and wondered, and listened to the cheerful klip, klap, which fell upon his ear, without interruption and so delightfully, till his full heart at length burst forth in tears of joy, and he was no longer able to contain himself, but fell upon the neck, first of his mother and then of his father, stammering as he could, words of gratitude.

Truly, Jonathan had reason to be thankful. For besides the wonderful and beautiful mill, there lay, as we have said, scattered over the table, brilliant in the light of the Christmas-tree, yet many other beautiful things, and all seemed to call to the happy boy: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, for unto you is born this day, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord!" Jonathan experienced this joy, felt it in his inmost heart, and from it streamed forth in his glistening, sparkling eyes, and from his smiling countenance which was covered as with hues of roses. He hurried from one object to another, wondered at everything, praised it all, rejoiced over all—now over the brilliant cross-bow of mahogany wood ornamented richly with silver, and then the fort with walls and ditches, with cannon, and soldiers who stood marshaled in uniform and rank; now his eye kindled with new delight as he viewed the large and splendid boxes of building material with hundreds of building stones, joists, columns, and arches, and then the beautiful red picture books with stories and fables, which promised him thousand fold entertainment! And thus he was

so immersed in all these delights we have mentioned, and still many more which we have not time even to mention, that he forgot all else, and even also the vow which he had a short time before made in the dark room to himself and Knecht Ruprecht.

Yet, no!—in this we do injustice to Jonathan. For suddenly he grew quiet and in earnest; a thoughtful look spread over his countenance, still glistening with bliss and joy, and with close scrutiny he surveyed the presents which Christkindlein had just spread before him.

"What is the matter, Jonathan?" asked his mother. "Are you no longer glad, or do you miss something that your heart had desired?"

"Oh, my dear mother, how could I be so unkind, so dissatisfied, and so unthankful as, in the the midst of such abundance, still to wish for and desire more?" replied Jonathan. "No, it is not that which has fallen upon my heart!"

"And what else might it be?" asked his father.

Then Jonathan related to them what he had thought and dreamed in the dark chamber, and what he had promised Knecht Ruprecht, and that now he would not, on the first Christmas evening, be unfaithful to his vow, but would certainly make some one happy, and that this one should be none other than Peter Hemskerk, the coachman's son!

"And wherefore, Peter?" asked his father, whilst his mother was rejoicing over the good resolution of her son, and with gentle hand stroking his locks, "Why should it be Peter and no one else?"

"Because he loves me, and also creates joy wherever he can," answered Jonathan; "and if

you will allow it, father, and you my good mother, I will now quickly prepare a Christmas table for him, and put on it some of the many things with which you, my dear parents, have so richly presented me."

"Do so, my son!" answered his father, well pleased, and his mother lent him her aid in arranging the table; and Jonathan placed the fort on it, and laid the cross-bow beside it, the very present which, except the mill, he had prized most highly, and which had given him the greatest pleasure. His mother suggested to him that he might lay something else on the table, and that Peter would rejoice just as much over it; but Jonathan answered smilingly: "And what pleasure would I have in it, if my making of presents to him did not require some conquering of self? Peter shall see that I give *freely*, even when I must bring him an offering that costs me a little self-denial."

His mother said no more, but only pressed a kiss on the pure forehead of her boy. Then Jonathan darted away and called Peter; but before he led him into the Christmas room, Peter had to permit his eyes to be tied with a handkerchief. This done, he led him right in front of his table, suddenly drew the band from his eyes, and cried out with joy: "Happy Christmas, Peter! Behold! this the Christkindlein has brought for you!"

Peter stared, wondered, and would not believe that Jonathan was in earnest in what he said. But when at length he was convinced, and had to believe that all was even so, he was greatly rejoiced and moved; and as he pressed Jonathan's hand, tears glistened under his eye lashes.

"Do you see, Jonathan, it is not the presents,

beautiful as they are, which I value most," said Peter; "no, no, it is that I now see that you do love me, and have a good heart, and, Jonathan"—he added more softly—"it is that you have not in your joy forgotten Knecht Ruprecht, but remember others also, to make them happy—do you see, this it is that so rejoices my soul, and never, as long as I live, will I forget you, and this evening; you are a good, dear Jonathan, and I,—I will always be your faithful Peter, as long as you will permit me to be near you!"

Then Jonathan smiled, and as he embraced Peter, he whispered into his ear: "You were Knecht Ruprecht, Peter? Now I know it, since you yourself have intimated it."

"Yes, it was myself: and I thought I would frighten you a little, but you acted bravely, Jonathan."

"Hey-day! why not? How could any evil befal me on the dear, holy Christmas eve, and in the house of my parents? On this I thought, Peter; and therefore I was not frightened in the least. But how comes it that you looked so tall with your horns?"

"That was easily arranged, Jonathan! I had hung a cow's skin over me; and the head with its horns I carried on a hay fork, high above me. Do you see?"

"Yes, I understand it," answered Jonathan. "But come now, and take a view of my mill! see, here it stands, and it is very beautiful, although you said I would get no mill at all!"

"Well, was not that better, little, simple Jonathan, than if I had said the contrary, and you would have gotten none. But see, beautiful it

certainly is! Beautiful and excellent! And it grinds too! A real mill, Jonathan!"

"A real, true mill, Peter! Just see!"

And Jonathan opened the sluices, and the water streamed down from the reservoir; the wheels turned, the mill-stones whirled round, the grains rolled in, it clattered klip klap, klip klap, and Peter rejoiced, and Jonathan rejoiced, and Mr. and Mrs. Monkenwyk rejoiced so much that they helped to play with the mill, like children; and so was fulfilled in them what is written by St. Luke ii: 10, 11: "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord!"

CHAPTER II.

THE MAPPELS.

More than seven full years have now passed since that happy Christmas eve. Seven long years which those changes of joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, happiness and misery, bring to every one,—yes, to every one, high or low, rich or poor, great or small. Time spares no one, but brings to each their gifts, be these painful or pleasant; and these must all be received with resignation to the unsearchable ways of God, who alone knows what will at least lead the human heart to salvation and blessedness.

Seven years had fled; and they had not passed by without also leaving behind them in the house of Mr. Monkenwyk, their deep and abiding traces.

Jonathan was now no more a child, but had grown up to be a fresh, blooming youth. Seven times, since that evening, he had celebrated the happy Christmas festival, but never again with the same full, rich, happy feelings, which, at that time, swelled his breast. During the first year after that Christmas, death took his mother from him ; and thoughts of her, the beloved, the departed, cast a gloomy shadow over the brilliant scene which afterwards, as before, gilded the Christmas festival of the boy—or at least was designed to do so. Jonathan could not forget his mother; the loss of her was too painful; whenever the holy eve returned, she was missed—she whose loving tender heart alone gave the blessed festival its true consecration, and shed upon it the calm, bright, pure radiance of joy and love.

But as Jonathan did not forget his mother, so also did he not forget the vow which he had made for himself on that holy evening. He let no Christmas festival pass by without at least doing some good, without making some one heart glad, which, but for him, had perhaps spent the dear holy eve in dark dreary joylessness. True, he could no more make his faithful Peter as happy as he wished to do. Peter's father had bought for himself a very small home in the country, not far from Amsterdam, and here he spent his old age in peace and contentment ; dug his little spot of ground, cultivated it with his own hands, sowed and reaped, and earned, in this way, his honest bread, even though he got little more than that. But Peter was not willing to be burdensome to his father, and hence went out to try his fortune in the world, and for a whole year Jonathan heard

nothing more of him ; however, often he thought, in lonely hours, of his honest and good Peter, who, till the last hour of their being together, had always remained his faithful friend.

That the faithful old Hemskerk had given up his position as coachman in the family, has its valid ground. After the death of his wife, Mr. Monkenwyk was no more the same man he had been before ; no more the serene, glad, lively man ; no more the calm business man who could, with ease, superintend and direct, with rare and keen ability, the extensive scene of his activity. He grew quiet, reserved and dreamy, and even more quiet, as he discovered that his business was no more going forward as smoothly and profitably as in earlier and better times, when his wife was still living and acting by his side.

Years bring fortune, and bring misfortune !

Earlier years had brought Mr. Monkenwyk rich and abundant fortune ; but now they brought him much more that was painful than joyful ; and Mr. Mappel, his chief book-keeper, had seldom anything but bad news to bring him when he made report on the course and current of business. Mr. Monkenwyk always received it, at least apparently, with calmness, and never uttered a word of anger or wrath. But he studied economy—curtailed his expenses. First he disposed of his horses and carriage ; and, very naturally, as there was no more driving to be done, the coachman was also no longer needed, and so the honest old Hemskerk took his leave and removed to the country.

As the news of loss and misfortune increased, and Mr. David Mappel came into the quiet curtain-shaded private room of Mr. Monkenwyk

oftener, and still oftener, to ask for money or other means of covering liabilities incurred, Mr. Monkenwyk at length said: "Sell the house and the mill, bring my affairs into order and to settlement, and pay the balance over to me. I wish to retire from business, and I trust sufficient, will be left to me that I and my son may live from it. True it is not a great fortune, but riches alone do not bestow happiness."

Mr. Mappel, a lean, pale man with blinking eyes, and an humble fawning manner, ever wore an accommodating smile on his lips when he spoke with Mr. Monkenwyk, bowed to the earth and withdrew. But Mr. Monkenwyk called him back again.

"Listen, Mappel," said he, "in order once for all to bring matters to a close, I will give you the fixed price at which I will sell. What is the last balance?"

"A small deficit of sixty thousand dollars, sir," answered Mappel, humbly.

"Sixty thousand dollars? That is a large sum, Mappel," said Mr. Monkenwyk. "Only day before yesterday they spoke of twenty thousand."

"Very true, very true," said Mr. Mappel, and bowed again. "Still new payments — new demands—shall I bring the books, and—then you can satisfy yourself."

"No, no, Mappel, I trust you!" said Mr. Monkenwyk, interrupting him. "Moreover what will be gained by it? Well, dispose of the mill for two hundred thousand dollars. Between brothers it is worth fifty thousand dollars more. And, as regards the house, sixty thousand dollars will be a fair price, and just cover my debts. Adieu, Map-

pel! It is my wish that within eight days all things may be arranged and concluded."

"Mr. Mappel noiselessly glided away. When he was gone, Mr. Monkenwyk turned toward one of the high arched windows, and said: "Jonathan, my son, when my affairs are settled we will live in quiet and peace together, far from the noise and the avaricious rush of the world, reserved and alone, and, therefore, more happy than now, when we can scarcely enjoy one peaceful hour."

"Yes, father, I have heard your determination, and am satisfied that we shall be thus withdrawn from cares of business," said Jonathan, coming out from the curtains of the window, where he had listened to the whole conversation of his father with Mappel. "You are right, father; riches alone cannot bestow happiness."

Mr. Monkenwyk stroked the blooming cheeks of his boy, sighed and said: "Yes, Jonathan, if only mother were yet alive!"

Then he sunk into his usual sadness, and remained silent, gloomy and reserved till late in the evening, although Jonathan endeavored to divert him from his sad thoughts and enliven him.

"Go to your rest, Jonathan," said Mr. Monkenwyk at length, arousing himself, as the richly gilded clock on the mantle-piece struck the eleventh hour. "Embrace me once more, my son! Go! And now, good night, good night, my child!"

His voice had become unusually tender as he spake the last words. He drew Jonathan to his breast, and kissed him affectionately twice, thrice, something that he had not done for a long time before. Jonathan felt quite happy at these marks of tender affection which he had lately so seldom re-

ceived, and went to bed more cheerful than usual. The poor youth did not dream of what awaited him next morning. Had he known it he would not have closed an eye during that night.

In the morning when the old housekeeper, Liese Crabetje, brought his coffee to his room, he asked as usual about his father.

"Master is not yet awake," answered Liese. "When he rings I will let you know, Jonathan."

It was nine o'clock; it struck ten, and Mr. Monkenwyk did not ring the bell. Liese Crabetje brought breakfast, and with it the intelligence that Mr. Monkenwyk had not yet left his sleeping room. This alarmed Jonathan, and he began to feel very uneasy. His father was in the habit of rising punctually at seven o'clock, and yet he slept so long! This must mean something.

"Good Liese," said Jonathan, "knock at his door, and listen whether father will answer."

Liese nodded assent, went away, and, only after a long while, returned with signs of alarm pictured on her countenance.

"He does not hear, Jonathan," she said. "I knocked ten times, and at last as loud as I was able, and also called, but received no answer, Jonathan. Not the least stir could I hear! All is still as death in the room!"

Jonathan grew pale with alarm. "Come, Liese," he said, "we must open the door, for I fear something may have happened to father."

Thus resolved, he went to the bed-chamber of his father and pressed the latch. Contrary to his expectations, the door was not bolted inside; but darkness reigned in the chamber, as the curtains had not yet been withdrawn.

Faber.

"Draw them aside softly," said Jonathan, with trembling voice, as he drew up to the tester-bed of his father.

Just as he threw apart the curtains, Liese drew aside the hangings of the window, and the bright light of day streamed into the room. With a shriek, Jonathan turned away from the bed, only the next moment to throw himself in despair back upon it! The first ray of the sun that fell through the window gleamed upon the pale forehead and closed eyes of Jonathan's father! One glance was enough to convince Jonathan that he was an orphan! Mr. Monkenwyk, during the night, had slumbered softly away into a more beautiful life in Heaven.

Fourteen days—three weeks passed away, and still Jonathan did not leave the room in which, with deep and pungent sorrow, he mourned the loss of his father. He had no desire to see any one, and could bear no one to be about him, except the good old Liese Crabetje, with her honest and truthful face, who spoke comfort to him as well as she could. Often had an old secretary of the sainted Monkenwyk—Vanderhaan was his name—called, and announced himself through Liese, but Jonathan, although he knew the old secretary as an excellent man, had no desire to see him or speak with him. Full ten times had Liese to deny him admission, notwithstanding his importunate requests, and in spite of his assurances that he had the most important communications to make to the youth,—and even the eleventh or twelfth time she was about to refuse him access to Jonathan, when he came one day with a most anxious countenance and deep wrinkles wrought upon his forehead.

"Good Crabetje," said he, seating himself, in a determined manner, on a chair in the ante-chamber, "now I will not permit myself to be sent away again! Here will I remain, and not move from this spot, even if I see no bed this night. Tell this to the young man, Crabetje; and tell him also,"—he added more softly and with sly glances,—"tell him that below in the counting house all things are not as they ought to be, and that he may easily lose house, home, and inheritance, if he does not himself look after his rights. You know, Crabetje, that I have been for many years a servant in this house, and that I have always taken a true and honest interest in all its affairs. Go, therefore, Crabetje, and tell young Jonathan that I desire to see him, and must speak with him, even if I should be dismissed from his service!"

The honest Liese was alarmed, for the old secretary stared her in the face with most ominous looks, and sat with such firm determination on his chair in the ante-chamber, that it was easy to be seen that he would not move from the spot, till he had gained his point. So Crabetje yielded, opened the door of the chamber, and said: "Mr. Vanderhaan, here is the room, and here is the young man. If you will venture to go to him!"

The old secretary hesitated not a moment. With a firm step he entered the room; nor did he draw back when Jonathan, on his entrance, aroused himself, and earnestly asked: "What do you wish? I can speak to no one! To no one! Do you hear! Withdraw yourself! I wish to be alone!"

Vanderhaan did not withdraw, but took a chair, and seated himself right before Jonathan, took

hold of both his hands, and then said; "God grant that there may yet be time, and that I may not be too late! You shall, you must listen to me, Jonathan! You are being cheated and robbed; and I, poor, old secretary, cannot prevent it, because I have not the power; but speak I can, speak I *will*, and I tell you Jonathan, that both the Mappels, David as well as his nephew Philip, will rob and cheat you—steal *all* you have, cheat you out of *all* you possess, if you do not instantly interfere, and drive them both away from the establishment! Now you know why I have forced myself in. You know me well, Jonathan; you know very well that I am no liar or deceiver. Now do as you think best, and what you think to be necessary and right!"

Jonathan was compelled to listen to the old secretary, who would not suffer himself to be put off: and, although the young man at first looked at him in a very gruff and angry manner, nevertheless, the expression of his countenance gradually changed, and at length he looked less displeased, and more earnest and considerate.

"My dear Vanderhaan," he answered, "how shall I understand all this? Do you really intend to say that the Mappels are acting dishonorably towards me?"

"Yes, this I would say, and this I repeat," replied the old secretary, letting Jonathan's hands drop, as he very well saw that now he had no more disposition to escape from him,—"both the old and the young Mappel are defrauding you—this I maintain."

"And in what way do they defraud me? Speak my friend!"

"They have sold the mill, Jonathan."

"Right! This they were directed to do! I myself was present when my sainted father entrusted the chief bookkeeper with that business."

"Directed him to sell the mill for one-fifth of its value? To sell it for the trifling sum of forty thousand dollars? And to sell this large and beautiful house for ten thousand dollars?" exclaimed the honest Vanderhaan with excited feelings. "Did you hear *this* from your sainted father?"

Jonathan was frightened. "Impossible!" said he. "I have heard it said that the mill should be sold for two hundred thousand, and the house for sixty thousand. So my sainted father directed!"

"So I would have supposed! So I should have thought!" added the secretary. "Now then, why do you delay? Down into the counting-room, drive out the rogues, and make their transactions null and void and prevent their injurious results! Haste! haste, Jonathan! There is not a moment to be lost, and I fear, we are even now, alas! too late!"

Jonathan had become pale; for if the honest secretary was right, he would be in the condition of a beggar. He quickly composed himself; advanced with a determined spirit toward the door, and said: "Follow me, friend! I will look after matters, and change the order of things!"

When Jonathan, in former times, while his father lived, occasionally visited this place of business, he was received by no one in a more kind and friendly manner than by Mr. David Mappel, the chief bookkeeper, who always bowed nearly to the earth before the son of the principal, and never

spoke to him except with words of the most gracious reverence. When Jonathan entered to-day he could not fail at once to observe that some great change had taken place in many respects. The counting-room, almost always filled and animated by clerks, was empty; and, beyond the two Mappels, no one was found in it, except a small, hump-backed, shrivelled fellow, in a shabby coat, who had the appearance of a half cast-off messenger of the court. Beside, the chief bookkeeper by no means greeted the young owner of the house with his wonted flattering politeness; on the contrary, Mr. Mappel, at his appearance, assumed a very shameless, bold, and arrogant air, and asked, impudently: "What do *you* want here, young man?"

"To see that all is right, Mr. Mappel!" answered Jonathan in a firm voice, and with a fearless and threatening glance of the eye. Lay the account-books before me, Mr. Mappel."

The bookkeeper laughed loud, and scornfully. "The account-books? What do *you* want with them? What do *you* know, you—greenhorn?"

"The account-books! this moment! I command you to do it; and I suppose I am master here, and that my directions are to be obeyed!"

"Do you hear, you Mr. Seybel," said Mappel, turning to the strange man with the threadbare coat, "do you hear how beautifully the young serpent knows how to hiss! It is a fine thing that we have, in advance, extracted its poisonous teeth! And, as to yourself Master Jonathan Monkenwyk, know you, without any further trouble, that here in this house, and in the counting-room you have no further orders to give—yes, just nothing to say, for

the house of Monkenwyk has suspended its payments, and has been compelled to declare itself bankrupt."

"A lie!—a bold, shameful, impudent lie!" exclaimed Jonathan. "You will be compelled to give an account to me of all your transactions."

"Quite right, young man!" replied Mappel, with cold scorn. "As much account as you please! Here's mein Herr, a well-accredited, royal Dutch notary, who has aided us in arranging the affairs of this house; you can ask him."

Jonathan, pale with excitement, turned toward the notary, and looked at him inquiringly.

"Quite correct! all quite correct!" said the man in a hoarse tone, nodding his head, while a wicked smile played upon his sharp and bloodless lips. "My friend David Mappel has, by authority duly given, taken charge of the house and mill of the blessed, departed Monkenwyk, and with the income he has paid such claims against the house of Monkenwyk as he was legally authorized to discharge. Here are the vouchers, contracts and all in proper order. Besides this, the Herr Mappel, as I see from the accounts, has yet claims against the house of Monkenwyk to the amount of ten thousand dollars, which sum must be paid by yourself."

"And the mill? inquired Jonathan, almost beside himself through surprise.

"The mill, the Herr Mappel has taken on himself at the extravagant price of forty thousand dollars!"

"Shameful defrauders! The sale is invalid! On what day was it concluded?

"On the day before the death of the sainted Monkenwyk!"

"Thus on the very day on wnich my father fixed the price of the mill at two hundred thousand dollars," said Jonathan, with a look of the deepest contempt toward Mappel. "You are a rogue! You shall answer before the court for your conduct, which is shameful, dishonest, and mean!"

"Before the court?" said Mappel, smiling scornfully. "Do you forget that I have a full right to sell, having been fully empowered by your own father, which I shall swear to any moment? Do you forget that you are my debtor—debtor to the amount of ten thousand dollars—and that I can have you taken at any moment by the bailiff, and cause you to be cast into prison? Do you forget that you are a beggar, a poor miserable, low, humiliated beggar, who has not a penny in his pocket? Away with you, beggar-like villain! This day, this hour, leave this house, of which not a tile on the roof any longer belongs to you; and if you shall dare, at any time to cross the sill of the door—if you shall dare to utter one slanderous word in regard to me, reckon on it, that you shall be confined for life in the debtors' prison! And away with you also, old Mr. Vanderhaan, since you have attempted, in this my house, to act as spy and tell-tale. Away with you both, or I shall call the bailiffs and have you cast out upon the street!"

Jonathan was white as the lime on the wall as he was compelled to hear these base words from the mouth of a rogue, who had, beyond all doubt, swindled him out of his paternal inheritance. Yet he controlled his excited feelings, and with a firm and fearless voice, said:

"Well! I fear that I am the victim of a mean, bold, cunningly devised, and successfully executed

scheme of rascality! I go! But know this, you miserable defrauder; know this you equally guilty accessory to a mean transaction; know both of you, that if even on earth no justice may be found for a poor orphan boy, there lives a Judge yonder above the clouds, who shall judge between you and me! I feel—I have a presentiment—I know that we do not for the last time stand in each other's presence in regard to this matter! A day will come when a reward shall be rendered according to the justice of the eternal God!—and then—wo to the guilty, wo to the dishonest, wo to the robbers of innocent orphans!"

CHAPTER III.

GOOD PETER.

"For God's sake, Jonathan," said the honest old Vanderhaan, when, after the violent outburst of indignation he had witnessed—he was leading the excited youth out of the counting-room to his chamber—"listen to me. What have you done? Mappel will never forgive you! And what if he now proceeds to extreme measures? What if he actually carries out his threats, and casts you into prison? Alas! he has the power, and is a wicked, wicked man!"

"No, no; he will not venture to do that," replied Jonathan. "There has been dishonesty, and the defrauder must fear lest things come to the light should he carry forward this shameful business to the utmost point. You may make yourself easy; he will not attempt it."

"He that has ventured the greater will not hesitate to undertake the less," replied Vanderhaan, with a significant shake of the head. "He will not rest until he has banished you from this house into the street, and reduced you to a state of complete beggary. Provide against it, Jonathan! Yield, and accommodate yourself to the force of circumstances; humble yourself a little, and you may perhaps still rescue a little something from the shipwreck which has swallowed up all. With force you can accomplish nothing; for I see already that the miserable man has arranged his scheme too adroitly whilst you were vainly afflicting yourself over the death of your father, my excellent employer. You have heard how that ragamuffin, the Notary Seybel, has confirmed every thing by the forms of law. The wretched scrub is no doubt bribed, but who can prove it? Ah, the cheat has done his work with much cunning, and all the rights that you have on your side avails you nothing against him. Yield, Jonathan! Take my advice, and yield!"

"Never, never!" answered Jonathan. "Never more will I humble myself before a rogue! I would rather beg my way from house to house, to seek my bread! On every street I will proclaim that this David Mappel is a defrauder; and if the people will not hear me, God himself will regard my just complaints!"

"No, no, no!" exclaimed the good old Vanderhaan, soothingly. "Not so rash, my dear Jonathan! Come, obey me! True, I am only a poor, old secretary, and you have yourself heard that Mappel has dismissed me from service, and I know not where, or how soon I may find employment

again; but so long as I have a crust of bread left, I will cheerfully share it with the son of my beloved, now sainted old employer, who was once my faithful well-wisher. Come, come, my Jonathan! Later we will leisurely consider what further steps may be taken to secure your rights to you!"

Jonathan firmly shook his head. "No," said he, "of my own free will I will not leave this house. I will see whether he will dare forcibly to drive me away. He will not venture it; you shall see, old friend, that he will not undertake!"

Scarcely had Jonathan uttered these words, when a noise was heard before the door, and suddenly Liese Crabetje, the old maid-servant, rushed into the chamber, pale and highly excited.

"Tell me, dear Sir, what is going on here!" she exclaimed. "Two police officers stand without, and Philip Mappel came with them. They ask to be shown in to you, Jonathan! What has come to pass? What do the men want?"

"You will soon hear, good Liese," answered Jonathan, who soon overcame his first confusion, while old Mr. Vanderhaan despairingly rung his hands. "Let them come in! It will do no good to attempt to resist them!"

As Liese hesitated to follow his directions, Jonathan himself hastily opened the door, and with a pale but peaceful face approached the police officers.

"What do you wish of me, gentlemen?" asked he. "Come nearer! And now, without reserve, what do you wish?"

The policemen shrugged their shoulders, and looked with an air of perplexity at young Mappel,

who, with a riding-whip in his hand, stood to one side, smiling scornfully as he played with his whip, without paying the least attention to Jonathan.

"Now, why this delay?" said he, to his attendants. "Attend to the matter entrusted to you without further ceremony."

"Well then, Master Monkenwyk," said one of the policemen in a sympathizing tone, "we are very sorry to bring you such a message; but you well know that our duty is to obey, and hence we must announce to you, that—that—"

"Hold your tongue, Sir!" interrupted Philip, in a brutal way,—"that the young man must this moment leave this house, which belongs to my honored uncle! Why so much ceremony with a beggar-boy? Do you hear, young lad, you are to pack off, and that in a moment!'

Old Liese uttered a loud shriek at this announcement, which came quite unexpectedly to her. Vanderhaan sighed, and sadly shook his grey head; Jonathan alone maintained his calmness.

"Is it true," he asked the policeman, "have you really such an order as this man here declares?"

"Yes, young Sir, alas!" answered the policeman respectfully, and with evident sympathy, "Mr. David Mappel has shown by documents that he is owner of this house, and in accordance with this showing we have been ordered —"

"To show you the way, young fellow!" again interrupted Philip, turning toward Jonathan. "Here is the door—march! If you make any resistance, these men have orders to use force."

"That will not be necessary," said Jonathan,

with more composure than Philip had perhaps expected. "Yes, yes, I am not at all surprised, that nothing good should come to me from you, Philip, although during the life-time of my father you were always full of fawning and flattery toward me."

"No insinuating talk, fellow!" exclaimed Philip, angrily,—"or I will use my riding-whip at your expense."

This rude and arrogant threat drew forth a flash of indignation from Jonathan's eyes, whilst old Liese Crabetje shrieked anew, and both the policemen cast an indignant look at Philip.

"Nothing of this kind, my young Sir! "You are forgetting yourself!" said one of them to Philip, with a good deal of sharpness.

"Let him be; only let him go on," interfered Jonathan. "I go, and shake the dust from my feet. But I have a hope that there will come a time, when I shall be able to demand an account for all injuries that are now heaped on me, an unprotected orphan. Good Liese, farewell! Farewell, Vanderhaan! God be with you, as I hope He will be with me!"

"What!" exclaimed Liese Carbetje. "Do you think I will remain in this house, Jonathan? Do you think that I will forsake you? Ah! from this God protect and preserve me! Immediately will I go along! Old Liese has saved and laid up a few ducats, and when other people act the rogue toward my young lord, he shall see that there are still some honest and faithful souls in the world. Yes, truly! Remain here under this roof, where till now, honest people have always dwelt, and where now, God alone knows, who shall bear rule!

No, my Jonathan, if you must go, old Liese goes too, without asking who shall remain here! God be thanked, no rogues either here or elsewhere, can command me."

"And I too will not forsake you, Jonathan—I too, will not!" said Vanderhaan, the tears hanging in his grey eye-lashes. "If we are poor in money and property, we old people are not wanting in love to our young lord, and of this we will convince you. Only come, Jonathan, in God's name! I shall yet live to see you return to this place in quite another way from that in which you are forced to go out; then the turn of going will come to others; and then it will be seen whether true friends will be here to sustain and comfort! Come on, Jonathan!"

Affectionately he took the young man by one arm, while Liese Crabetje took the other, and thus they led him away. Jonathan made no resistance; for the sincere affection shown him by the faithful servants of his father, touched and rejoiced his heart. Without casting even a single glance of contempt at Philip, he left the house, and outside, as he had said to Philip he would, shook the dust from his feet, and accompanied Vanderhaan to his humble hut, to which very naturally Liese also followed him, and to which he was heartily welcomed by the old secretary. Here, however, where a noble pride no more enabled him to hold up his head, his deep sorrow, which he had hitherto repressed, at length found an outlet. He cast himself on a chair, buried his pale face in both his hands, and wept aloud. Never had he so deeply felt himself to be a poor, unprotected orphan, as in that moment, when he found himself basely

driven from his father's house as a sacrifice to the avarice and wickedness of low-minded and miserable men.

"Weep not, Jonathan," said Liese; and Vanderhaan did all he could to divert his young friend. But it was a long time before their combined efforts succeeded in quieting the disturbed feelings of Jonathan. The thoughts which controlled him were too bitter—his indignation at the shameless impudence of the two Mappels had too deeply stirred every drop of his blood, to enable him so soon to regain his wonted balance of mind. But when he discovered how deeply he grieved his two old friends by his long continued sorrow, he earnestly sought to control himself, and became more calm.

The evening of this eventful and stormy day, closed freer of clouds and more serenely than any one of them had ventured to hope; and at bedtime there came a very amusing scene, when the honest old Vanderhaan confessed, that it was time to retire, but that he had not yet as much as thought of how matters for sleeping could be arranged. Luckily old Liese was an ingenious housekeeper, and knew what to counsel. Before a half hour had passed another bed was prepared in a side chamber of which she took possession. Jonathan had to sleep in Vanderhaan's bed; and the host, himself, had to get along on the sofa as a punishment for not having sooner thought of providing beds for his guests.

The several succeeding days passed amid all kinds of plans devised by the three friends, by which to wrest again from the claws of the vultures the possessions of which they had robbed

Jonathan. But they soon saw that this was not to be done either so easily or as soon, as they had at first hoped. Vanderhaan and Jonathan called on several of the most eminent lawyers in Amsterdam, asking their assistance which was always promised them. When, however, they had told them the situation of things, each one of the lawyers shook his head and started back. Each one agreed that it was possible, yea that it seemed highly probable, that David Mappel was a rogue and a cheat, but also added that he had too carefully secured himself to be proceeded against successfully. Through the whole town men were indignant at the shameful conduct of Mappel. Every one passed him with manifest contempt; but Mappel stood on the documents empowering him to act as he did, and laughed in his sleeve amid all the rage of his opponents. This much was certain —no one could harm him; "unless," as an old ingenious lawyer at last said, "the Notary Seybel could be induced fully to reveal the whole scheme of rascality in which he had, no doubt, under cover of secrecy, aided Mappel in perfecting and carrying out." Of this, it is true, there was as yet no prospect; but still Jonathan treasured up his words with a view of perhaps acting on the hint at some future time.

"I strongly suspect," added the lawyer, "that all the papers on which the rascally Mappel stays himself, were only prepared after the death of the sainted Monkenwyk, and if this could be proven, they would have no validity whatever; would not be worth a mushroom, and the Herr Mappel would not only be compelled to yield up all, but also be permitted to pay a visit of some ten or

fifteen years to the penitentiary. But Seybel, who drew up all these documents will hardly acknowledge that they are all forged, and that they were written after my Lord Monkenwyk's death; for should he confess it he would share a like fate with Mappel. Hence, there is no hope unless the unfaithful Notary could be bribed by a large sum of money and the promise that he should be permitted to go unpunished. This is the only way by which the end could perhaps be attained; but certainly without a considerable sum of money success could not be expected."

This was the last opinion in regard to the case which Jonathan received. It contained very little of comfort or hope; for he was not much more than a beggar. Vanderhaan possessed not even the necessaries of life, and the honest Liese had, it is true, her spare penny, which she was ready with great pleasure to offer, but the small sum was far from sufficient to excite the avarice of the Notary and allure him from his devotion to his fellow rogues.

"We will give it up," said Jonathan, when in company with his faithful old friends he had examined the matter on all sides. "There is no use in attempting impossibilities, and to effect a discovery of the dishonest scheme is impossible. Let us rather consider what I am to do to make my way through life, and to open a sphere of activity, by following which I may honestly earn my bread."

Vanderhaan and Liese Crabetje would not hear of this; for they said he was yet too young to support himself, and meanwhile they would both provide for, and in general take care of him. But

to this Jonathan would not consent, saying that they needed all they had for the comfort of their old age; and thus they contended with one another for some time without coming to any conclusion, when suddenly the door was thrown widely open, and a large, strong, broad-shouldered young man entered with earnest step.

"Where is he," he exclaimed with a strong voice, which made the windows shake; "Where is my Jonathan? Oh, there you are! Jonathan, my dear youth. God be praised that I have at last found you!"

"Peter Hemskerk! My Peter!" Jonathan exclaimed aloud, and springing up, threw himself into the arms of the large and pleasant youth, from whose blue eyes flowed crystal tears, whilst he enfolded the pale, feeble lad in his strong arms, lifted him up like a child, swung and kissed him;—"My good Peter! what brings you here? Have you already heard, Peter?"

"I know all—of course!" answered Peter, as he wrinkled his forehead. "Just on this account I came from Rotterdam hither to see after the right, and to stand by my dear Jonathan against the rascals and rogues, and by my life if I get hold of them—these knaves Philip and David Mappel, —they shall feel that Peter has a pair of sound arms and fists that know how to take hold! But, first of all, tell me particularly, how all things transpired, and afterwards when I know all things —well, then the rest will come in play."

Jonathan began to relate; Vanderhaan and Liese Crabetje helped him, and it was not long till Peter was fully informed, not only of what had happened, but also of the uncertain plans of Jona-

than for the future. He shook the hands of the old secretary and honest Liese, and said: "You are true blood; this is already seen in the fact that you have not forsaken our young master! But now it is enough! You, my friend Vanderhaan, must see that you obtain a new post as secretary; and you, worthy Liese Crabetje, can in any case, for some time, maintain yourself on what you have saved. This is my opinion in regard to you both. But my Jonathan shall go with me! I am young and can labor for him; you are old and need what you can earn. Moreover it is not proper that Jonathan remain in Amsterdam, when it must ever be as a sword in his heart; when he must pass the house of his sainted father, and think of the rogues who have stolen it from him. This is not suitable, I say, and hence he must come away, out into the world—away with me to Rotterdam; and that he may not there be in want of necessary care, and that no rough wind may blow in his face—let me see to that! This is all fixed, Jonathan! Before I left home to look a little after the right here, I spoke to my employer, the good Cornelius Beukelaer, whose chief warehouse superintendent I am, Jonathan, and he told me at once that I should bring you with me, if nothing could be secured for you from the ruins in Amsterdam; and of course you will now go with me, and the Herr Beukelaer will soon make a man of you, Jonathan, an excellent well-balanced merchant, for whom the people will be compelled to have respect, in the Old as well as in the New World—and now enough said! You go with me, Jonathan—with your Peter? This is no longer a question. And you know very well, Jonathan, that I advise you only for your own good; hence do not hesitate; and I

can tell you this much, my dear youth, that the Herr Beukelaer is a wonderfully fine man, who thinks much of me, and will also of you, when he once comes to know you. Now, all fixed, Jonathan. You go with your Peter!"

Peter spoke out fully and with such decision, that there was, in fact, nothing farther to do but for Jonathan to say, yes; and the good Vanderhaan with Liese must be satisfied with the arrangement. So it was concluded upon; after some discussion for and against, all the proposals of Peter were accepted, and no later than the following morning, Jonathan had to bid adieu to his friends, as Peter declared that the Herr Beukelaer could no longer dispense with him and his services.

The good Liese wept! the venerable Vanderhaan could scarcely master his feelings so as to say farewell; but Peter cut short the parley, by taking Jonathan under his arm, half carrying, half dragging him out of the house, and away they went as if the pavements of Amsterdam were burning under their feet!

When they had gone beyond the gate, and the steeples of the city had gradually faded away in the background, Peter clapped his companion gently on the shoulder, looked tenderly into his clouded eyes, and in an earnest and animating tone, said: "Courage, Jonathan, lift up your head! You shall see that the Herr Beukelaer and I, with God's help, will make a man of you! And when you are a man, Jonathan—well, then we will some day have a few words to say to Messieurs David and Philip Mappel! Now, courage, Jonathan! courage brings fortune!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE NEIGHBOR'S CHILDREN AND MR. BEUKELAER.

PETER had not promised too much to Jonathan. Beukelaer received the orphan boy in the most friendly manner, gave him a post in his employ, home and boarding in his house, and beyond this a small salary which was sufficient to enable Jonathan to keep himself properly clothed. With this he was well content; and not only from a sense of duty, but also from gratitude for the kindness of his employer, he used all diligence to perform the duties entrusted to him in such a way as called forth the praise of his superiors. Even during his apprenticeship his wages were increased; and when he had served his time in this capacity he was appointed as one of the assistant book-keepers, and one year later he received a salary which enabled him to enjoy all the advantages that a young man can desire.

But Jonathan was far from desiring more enjoyments. He husbanded his means; and only at Christmas, when the white snow covered the earth, and the cold north wind was roaring hoarsely around, was he accustomed to open his purse more than ordinarily wide. There was a reason for this. The friendly reader will easily guess it, if he still remembers the good resolutions which Jonathan formed once on a Christmas festival in his childhood—but the treasurer of Mr. Beukelaer could not comprehend why the otherwise enonomical Jonathan always became so extravagant in spending money about Christmas time. As Jonathan

at no time asked to draw more than was at the time due justly to him, the treasurer paid him what he asked on these occasions, only thinking within himself that Jonathan must at times be overtaken by a kind of gentle mania.

It was, however, no madness, but only Jonathan's own way of celebrating Christmas. The first Christmas festival after the death of his father at first bid fair to prove to him a very sad one; for as the day approached on which the Christmas-tree had always been lighted up for him, the thought lay heavily on his heart that he had now no one left who took a kindly interest in him, except perhaps his friend Peter, who however could not make up for the loss of father and mother.

"This will prove to be a tearful Christmas-eve to me after so many joyful ones which I have enjoyed in times past," he muttered to himself, as on a cold Sunday in December he stood at the window of his little room, and looked down thoughtfully into the yard—for his window overlooked the yard—I wish it were already past, or I could sleep through the whole festival, so that I would neither hear nor see any thing that is going on!"

Thus he stood and inwardly complained, whilst he conjured up before his mind the pleasant and brilliant images of the beautiful past, and his eye grew even cloudier, his countenance darker, till he observed at length two small children, of six and seven years, in the yard, who ran about laughing with joy; and although they were very barely clad in light smock frocks, yet shouted joyfully, throwing snow over themselves, and then ran and

shouted again, as if it were spring time without, and they felt nothing of the cold.

Here, after he had for some time viewed the happy little creatures, his sorrowful face suddenly brightened up, and a sunny smile played upon his lips.

"Am I not a fool and an ingrate thus to sigh and complain?" he said to himself. "Is it not written, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive?' And am I not happy enough in being able to give, be it ever so little; and is it not a true joy to see around one's self, glad and happy faces who are satisfied with the little that is offered them by the hands of love? Is it not sinful in me, that I have not before thought of my vow, and that it is only now called to my mind by these poor and yet happy children? But to-morrow I will speak with the treasurer and with Peter, and then—who knows, whether my Christmas will not yet be happier than I had dreamed of!"

Jonathan spoke with the treasurer, and rejoiced like a child when he was told that four whole ducats were due him which he might draw any moment. Then he spoke with Peter, and asked him who the little children were that had yesterday played in the yard. Peter told him they were very, very poor children from a neighboring house, whose father was long since dead, and whose mother, an excellent woman, with the greatest difficulty, but honestly, sought to support them with the labor of her hands. When he heard this, he smiled quietly to himself, and inwardly right happy, so that Peter was quite surprised, and wondered why Jonathan could be made so happy by such information in regard to such poor people—till at last Jonathan

said: "Now all is well, Peter! And now come, you must assist me in putting up a Christmas-tree, and in buying the things that belong to it, and then we will enjoy a calm and serene evening in spite of the wicked Mappels, who certainly do not think that this Christmas can be a happy Christmas to me!"

"Yes, but for whom is the Christmas tree?" asked Peter, quite surprised.

"Do you not guess it, Peter?" answered Jonathan. "Do you think that nothing but curiosity induced me to inquire about those poor children? And have you quite forgotten what I promised you with a grasp of the hand, namely, that I would not let a single Christmas pass without making some one happy? Do you not now see very clearly that it is for these poor children here that I intend to prepare this pleasure? If you do you must certainly also see that a Christmas festival and no Christmas-tree is only half a joy? Now then, Peter, will you assist me or not?"

"Ho! what questions these are!" exclaimed Peter, whose face had gradually brightened up like the heavens after a foggy autumn morning. "Of course I will, and with all my heart this is understood; and the greatest part of my pleasure is that you are ever happy when you can befriend others. Yes, yes, I will help you Jonathan, not only in putting up the Christmas-tree and in making the purchases, but I will also go over to the poor woman Lys, and will draw from her what it is she most needs; for this suits me better than you, Jonathan, and afterwards we will attend to the buying; and you will discover, that we will get the very best things at the very cheapest price;

and the trouble will not be too great to go from one end of the city to the other! But have you money enough, Jonathan?"

"Four whole ducats, which I do not need, as I have already provided my winter clothing," replied Jonathan.

"Ha, money enough, and to spare!" exclaimed Peter, clapping his hands. "But if it should still not be enough, I have my saving-box, and thus we shall have a Christmas festival over which the angels in heaven will rejoice! Only let me work, Jonathan. As early as to-morrow, I will know what the Christmas-man must buy, and what Knecht Ruprecht must put into his pockets!"

Certainly no better Knecht Ruprecht than Peter, could Jonathan any where find. As soon as he had locked up his warehouse, he stole over to widow Lys, and so skillfully did he put his questions, that in less than an hour he got all the information he desired, whilst the poor woman did not in the least suspect *why* Peter asked the questions he did. She regarded his inquiries in no other light than as a Christian interest and neighborly sympathy, and did not even dream that he had something more in view. After an hour, Peter rose and went away. The next morning he and Jonathan made their calculations, and it was found that the four ducats would not only be sufficient to procure what the children needed, but that a considerable sum would remain to be otherwise appropriated.

Jonathan now went and drew his four ducats, which not a little excited the wonder of the treasurer, and then, whenever there was any leisure time—which was every afternoon after five o'clock

—Peter and Jonathan, in spite of snow, cold and slush, tramped all through the city, now gliding into this store, now into that, buying, bargaining, trading, and carrying home, till they had gathered all they needed. Then, on the beloved Christmas-eve, they were early in Jonathan's room and ornamented the Christmas-tree, fastened candles on it, hung gilded apples and nuts upon it, and whole garlands of raisins and almonds; and afterwards, when the tree was finished, they placed it on a table which was covered with a cloth as glistening white as the snow upon the roofs without; and now they began to unpack, and spread over the table, in a neat and orderly manner, what the Christmas-man had presented for the children. Last of all Jonathan took something from the drawer of his trunk, and laid it privately separate from the rest; but still on the table under the sugar-tree, which extended its green and heavily laden branches over it as if to protect it: "and now, Peter," said he, "now they may come in right away, we are done!"

"Yes, all done, except the lighting of the lights," answered Peter, whilst looking with the greatest satisfaction over the whole arrangements. "But the joy, Jonathan! The joy! And the surprise! For neither the children nor the mother suspect anything!"

"Yes, Peter, I believe myself that they will rejoice," said Jonathan, as he nodded his head with satisfaction. "But what think you, shall we not call them in, and light the lights?"

"What a foolish Jonathan!" exclaimed Peter, "do you not see that it is still bright day-light? Rather, we will yet arrange the supper, add the

herring-salad and the puddings, put the tea-kettle in order; for you know, Jonathan, joy excites hunger and thirst, and the little people will eat heartily when they have made themselves hungry with delight!"

"Right, Peter," answered Jonathan. "I see right well that you are still the wisest one of us, and always hit the nail on the head. When we have put the eatables on the table we will meanwhile place it in the side chamber, and when an appetite begins to show itself we need but bring it out."

Then they fixed the herring-salad, sliced the puddings, cold roast, and ham, piled up delicately bread and butter like a pyramid on a plate, filled the tea-pot, and placed cups around the table, all amid sly laughing, talking, and guessing whether this and that would please the children, and whether they would be delighted from the bottom of their hearts. Meanwhile it had actually become dark, and now Jonathan earnestly insisted, that Peter should go and bring the poor widow Lys and her children, whilst he should give the final touches to the tree, and set off the wax lights. Peter agreed to it, though he would in fact rather have waited a quarter of an hour longer. He went, and in five minutes afterwards he knocked again at the door, and asked whether all things were ready?—"All ready!" echoed Jonathan's voice from within; and at once the door was flung wide open, and so brilliant was the glory that poured out from the place, that the children half blinded by the glare, broke out with a loud "Oh!" "Oh!" whilst the widow Lys stood dumb with wonder and surprise, gazing into the sea of light

before her. But Peter did not give them much time to recover from the first joyful fright.

"Happy Christmas! Mrs. Lys," he exclaimed, with a clear, loud voice. "Happy Christmas, children! he shouted, and then he spread his large arms and pushed the whole company before him into the room like a baker pushes his cakes into the oven.

"And now, enjoy yourselves, children!" he exclaimed. "Cheer up, Mrs. Lys!" Master Jonathan here, takes a pleasure in playing Christmas-man a little, and here lie his gifts, and you must lay hold of them now heartily, or he will think that you despise him! But I see you know how to act; and now Jonathan," he added, very softly, "only listen now, to the joy of the little rogues, and just look at Mrs. Lys, and if that is not enough for you, I will have to regard you as the most dissatisfied man in the whole world!"

But Jonathan was satisfied, and not only satisfied, but absolutely happy, and more than happy in his heart of hearts, as he listened to the shouts of the little ones, who were rejoicing over their beautiful new clothes, and hats, and boots, and playthings; and saw the unspeakable bliss that streamed forth from the eyes of the mother, and the tears of joy that rolled over her pallid cheeks!"

"Peter," said Jonathan, softly, into the ear of his friend, "Peter, it is true: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive;' happy as I am now this moment, I did not even then feel when that mill —do you yet remember it, Peter?—when that wonderful and beautiful mill was presented to me on Christmas."

"Yes, yes; I can well think this, Jonathan; for I felt as if I must shout aloud, and jump, and dance," answered Peter, laughing all over his face. "But see! how Mrs. Lys is rejoicing over that warm woolen dress which we bought for her. Yes, I am sure she will be able to make use of it in the cold days of winter, and ——."

But Peter could not finish the sentence, for Mrs. Lys, deeply moved, came up to them to express her warm thanks; and the children came, and Jonathan had his hands full, to ward off the many thanks they were bringing him, while he felt as if he ought to thank them for all the joy filling his heart,—till at last Peter, who noticed Jonathan's confusion, came in between, took the children, without ceremony, by the hand, and exclaimed: "Let me now see whether the coats, and trousers, and shoes fit well!"

This, as we may well suppose, suited the children exactly, and the mother had nothing to say against it, but rather herself took hold, and in five minutes the youngsters stood before them dressed neat and tidy, so that it was a real pleasure to behold them. Proper admiration was expressed at their fine appearance, and then Mrs. Lys was making motions to take the clothes off again; but Jonathan would not suffer it, and Peter sustained him in it, so that the mother had to yield, resisting, a little but yet not reluctant, for she was overjoyed at seeing the pleasant faces of the children in their new clothes with cheeks as red as Borsdorf apples.

When all this was over, and the lights on the Christmas-tree had to be put out, because they were already beginning here and there to kindle

the pitchy twigs of the pine, of which the Christmas-tree was made, Peter suggested that they now arrange them around the table, to which Jonathan was fully agreed. Then they brought the richly covered table from the little room; and the shouts of the children broke out afresh when they heard that their little inner man also was not to be sent away empty. All sat around the table. Mrs. Lys had to prepare the tea; Peter, meanwhile, filled the plates of the laughing children with heaps of herring-salad, bread and butter, and all kinds of meat; and now all feasted heartily, and it could well be seen how wonderfully were all things tested. Till toward ten o'clock in the evening, they feasted and talked, and not until the children's eyes closed of pure weariness, did Jonathan and Peter consent that they should be taken home and put to bed. Each picked up one of the little ones and carried him away, while the mother was loaded with presents; and so ended, at length, this Christmas-eve, which Jonathan and Peter in after years ever regarded as one of the pleasantest of their lives.

Besides, Jonathan had learned by experience that it is more blessed to give than to receive. On every subsequent Christmas season he repeated such gift-giving in his room, and Peter faithfully aided him in it. The only difference between these and former times was that every time Peter was required to invite more children, according as Jonathan's income increased. Jonathan found his greatest pleasure in seeing happy children's faces around him, and thus to transfer himself back in thought to his own childhood, when he was just as innocent, just as joyful, and happy, as these little

ones who now hopped around him, and gratefully received his gifts.

Six times had Jonathan in this way celebrated the Christmas festival; and just then, for the seventh time, were the children dancing around the three-cornered table with the illuminated Christmas-tree, when quite suddenly and unexpectedly the door opened, and Jonathan's principal, Mr. Cornelius Beukelaer, highly astonished, entered the room.

"Do I dream, or am I awake?" said he, rubbing his forehead, overhung with grey locks. "What is going on here? In my own house, without me knowing anything of it! Heh! Master Jonathan Monkenwyk, what does all this signify?"

Jonathan looked a little perplexed, for he did not wish to boast of his good deeds, but followed rather the rule that the left hand must not know what the right hand does—but Peter spoke out at once, and said: "You see, good Mr. Beukelaer, Jonathan is making a little pleasure for himself, and is celebrating the dear Christmas! This he has done every year since he has been here!"

"Impossible! I was not aware of any thing of the kind!" replied the principal.

"To be sure you were not, for Jonathan is such a modest fellow, and was anxious that no one should know of it! I am surprised, dear Sir, that you have just come in upon us!"

"Hem! hem! quite right!" answered Mr. Beukelaer. "I was taking a little exercise in the open air in the yard, saw suddenly the illuminated windows here, and my curiosity was awakened to know what might be the occasion. Thus I came in and —— well yes, something of this kind I

had not expected, it is true, master Jonathan Monkenwyk. Hem ! hem ! still I will not disturb you, will speak some other time of your little Christmas pleasures. Must cost you a good deal of money, Jonathan ? Is it not so ?"

"Not more. kind Sir, than I had saved during the year," answered Jonathan. "Only ask the treasurer.

"I believe it, I believe it, without asking," said Mr. Beukelaer. "You are a very orderly young man, also handy and useful ; I know this, even though I did not say so to you. I am satisfied with you ; and do you hear, come to my room to-morrow morning early, at nine o'clock ; I wish to speak with you. Good night !"

As soon as he had uttered these words, Mr. Beukelaer turned so hastily away, that Peter, who quickly seized a candle, could hardly light him down the steps.

"Excellent young man ! Noble young man !" Peter heard Mr. Beukelaer murmur to himself, and as this seemed to him no ill omen, he returned to Jonathan in good spirits, who appeared to him to look somewhat sober and thoughtful.

"What is up ?" asked he. "The visit of the Herr has not, I hope, spoiled your Christmas spirits, Jonathan ?"

"O no, nothing of that kind, for we are not engaged in anything wicked, here," replied Jonathan. "I was only trying to think what it might be that the Herr Beukelaer wishes to say to me As long as I have been here he has never before ordered me to his room."

"This does not at all seem strange to me," said Peter. "It has never been known that he asso-

ciates with his men outside of the hours of business, not even with his chief bookkeeper. It is, therefore, without doubt, something particular that he wants with you, Jonathan; but this I confidently say that it is nothing bad, and nothing disadvantageous to you. Think no more of it, Jonathan! To-day is Christmas, and to-morrow—is to-morrow!"

Jonathan took this advice, and mingled with the children, and in the midst of their rejoicing and friendly kisses he soon forgot every thing else. This Christmas passed as happily and as rich with enjoyment as the rest had done before, and only when the children had all been withdrawn, and all became quiet again in Jonathan's chamber, did he think again of Mr. Beukelaer, and murmured thoughtfully: "What can he want?"

"Nothing bad, Jonathan," said Peter, who had heard his softly spoken words. "I heard a little bird whistle, and can assure you that there is nothing of a threatening nature in the business. The bird whistled: 'Excellent young man! Noble young man!' and hence lie down in peace and sleep without anxiety. Good night."

Jonathan also thought this would be best, and fell asleep. The next morning early at nine o'clock, he knocked at the room door of Mr. Beukelaer, and as he entered the chamber, Peter met him, laughing all over his face. "All well!" said Peter, and Jonathan bowed before the principal, who received him very kindly, and even greeted him with a shake of the hand, which was a very unusual thing for Mr. Beukelaer to do.

"Be seated, my young friend," said he. "And now, as I very well see that you are anxious to

know why I requested you to come to my room, we will proceed to the matter without delay. I have a friend, a dear and precious friend at Paramaribo, in Surinam. He has applied to me in very urgent circumstances for my counsel and assistance. Were I not too old, I would have gone to him myself; but I begin to be feeble, and would hardly endure the weariness of a sea voyage; and if on the way anything should befal me, I would, with the best intentions, only make the condition of my friend worse instead of better. Hence I have thought best to send another to him in my place. But where should I find this substitute? Where should I find one who unites in himself business talent with the power of silence, and a kindly disposition?—traits that are indispensable in this business. I looked around—I found one. It was an inward anxiety I had for my friend, that yesterday drove me about restless and caused me thus to see your brilliantly illumined windows. I came up to your room, and—what I saw determined my course. My dear young friend will you undertake my message to Paramaribo?"

"Yes, my lord, I will do it with pleasure," answered Jonathan at once. "And I will do my best to justify your confidence, although I do not know in what way I should have deserved it!"

"Enough of that," replied Mr. Beukelaer. "I have already spoken with my chief book-keeper and the superintendent—Peter, you know, met you—and all this has satisfied me. I give you my full confidence, and will provide you with the most unlimited authority. If half my fortune is necessary to deliver my friend from the difficulties

into which he has fallen without fault of his own, act without hesitation. And now, do you hear?"

More than an hour did Mr. Beukelaer speak with Jonathan, gave him the most particular information and rules for emergencies, and inducted him fully into a matter, which, to judge from the earnest countenance of Jonathan, was surrounded with weighty difficulties. Still, when Jonathan knew all, he did not hesitate one moment, to repeat his willingness to undertake the difficult, if not perilous, business, and to place himself entirely at the disposal of his principal.

"Only this and nothing more do I expect of you," said Mr. Beukelaer. "And if I am not wholly deceived in you, all things will come out successfully. How much time do you think you will need to prepare for your departure?"

"Not more than is required to prepare my commission papers. As to myself, I am ready at any moment."

"Very good!" said Mr. Beukelaer, quite well satisfied. "The commission papers are already made out, and there is a ship ready to sail lying in the harbor."

"To-day I will go on board," replied Jonathan. "Yet, one thing more, Mr. Beukelaer. It might come to pass that when I get there, I might need the assistance of some decided and earnest man; would you permit me to take such an one with me?"

"Do you know any one in whom you could place implicit confidence?"

"Yes, my lord. Peter Hemskerk is my friend, and I have full confidence in him."

"Peter? Yes! He is a decided man. You can

take him with you; I approve of it fully, and really believe that you will need such a man for the success of the work."

"I will guarantee success," said Jonathan, "if I have Peter to aid me."

"Very well, that is fixed," said Mr. Beukelaer, "Here are your papers! Inform your companion! And now, God protect you, my young friend. Safe voyage; and may you bring my friend in Surinam the desired help and deliverance!"

On the same day Jonathan and Peter left the city, and went on board the ship, which had waited only for their arrival to weigh anchor. A fresh north-east wind filled the sails, and hopefully did Jonathan look into the future, dark and vague as it lay before him. But he trusted in God, in himself, and his friend Peter, who honestly and manfully stood by his side.

CHAPTER V.

PANTHERS.

After a favorable voyage Jonathan and Peter arrived safely at Paramaribo. They found the business there to be attended to, exactly in the state in which Mr. Beukelaer had represented it. The most exact knowledge of business transactions, the utmost secresy, and a kindly disposition, were necessary for its proper adjustment. Fortunately Jonathan possessed talents which answered fully to this demand, and they managed the affair in such a manner as called forth the most sincere thanks of the commercial friend of Mr. Beukelaer.

The business was of too complicated a character to be here circumstantially detailed. It is sufficient to say that Jonathan was held in the highest esteem in the house of Mr. Seyders, and a thousand evidences of gratitude were lavished upon him, when after ten months of the most wearisome labor, he had at length concluded the whole matter without any loss or disadvantage to Mr. Beukelaer or his friend. Mr. Seyders was not willing, at the end of that period, to permit him to return to Europe; but insisted that Jonathan and Peter should remain with him some time longer, till they had refreshed themselves, and seen the most interesting localities in Surinam more leisurely than had been hitherto possible.

"What say you, Peter?" asked Jonathan one evening of his friend, after Mr. Seyders had again repeated his urgent request.

"I think Mr. Seyders is right," answered Peter. "You have labored beyond your strength, Jonathan, and hence you can allow yourself some time for recreation."

"Still, what will the Herr Beukelaer say, if we make him wait for our return, Peter?"

"Should we now at once set sail for home, he would say: 'You are fools that you didn't remain longer.' No one goes a journey half round the globe, without learning to know something of the other side!"

"I really believe myself, that the Herr Beukelaer would say so," answered Jonathan laughing. "Well, then let us tarry a little while."

Thus they concluded to delay their return for some time; and intelligence which they received from Europe, afterwards induced them to delay

even still a little while longer. Mr. Beukelaer insisted that Jonathan should by no means hasten his return, whilst he bestowed upon him the warmest praise for having so well attended to the business committed to his hands. Peter prided himself a little for having so correctly judged Mr. Beukelaer, and Jonathan remained till, unperceived, the old Christmas day returned. He himself would scarcely have thought of it, for the month of December wears quite a different face in Surinam from what it does in Holland or in our own country, and neither snow squalls, nor cold northeast winds, nor yet mirror-like frozen streams and lakes, aided his memory the least. But Mr. Seyders reminded him of it.

"Not so, my dear friend," said he one morning to Jonathan, "it still seems a little strange to you that even to-day everything is yet so beautifully green around you. Nothing like this have you ever seen in Europe. Have you?"

"Why should this strike me particularly to-day?" asked Jonathan.

"Why? Because this is Christmas-eve, my dear friend! See! this you had quite forgotten!"

Jonathan started. "Yes, verily," he exclaimed, "I thank you kindly, Mr. Seyders, that you have reminded me of it! Is Christmas not observed here? I do not see the least preparation for it,—no Christmas-market! nothing, nothing that can awaken old memories!"

"No, my dear friend; for anything of the kind you will here look in vain," answered Mr. Seyders. "To-morrow, it is true, is a holiday; the ringing of the bells will remind you of a high festival, but Christmas gift-givings there are none with us.

except perhaps among a few emigrant families, who keep up the good old custom also here in our tropical climate."

Jonathan lost himself in silent meditation. Suddenly he started up, went out to seek for Peter, whom he found in the beautiful garden of Mr. Seyders.

"Peter!" he called.

"What now?" said Peter.

"Do you not know what day this is?"

"A *beautiful* day, Jonathan! Pleasant and warm, and the heavens as blue as a ripe plum."

"And what more, Peter?"

"What more! I do not know!"

"Ah, Peter, you also do not know! CHRISTMAS! it is CHRISTMAS!"

Peter looked around puzzled. "Hallo! yes; is it possible!" he exclaimed. "But in such a garden where everything is green and blooming—in the midst of palm trees, bananas and pine apples—who would think of Christmas, of *our* Christmas, where one is accustomed to see nothing but ice and snow. I am not at all surprised that I forgot it; and do not deny it, Jonathan, you were also told of it by some one else!"

"I do not deny it, Peter! Mr. Seyders told me. But what now, Peter?"

"Yes, what now! What more do you want, Jonathan?"

"Have you forgotten my vow, Peter?"

"No, no! I think of it, certainly! But what good does that do, here in this country? there is not even a spruce tree to be found, so that one might dress it. Here no Christmas can be celebrated, Jonathan!"

"But something good can still be done, Peter! and my mind is already made up——."

"To what?"

"To get the loan of a horse of Mr. Seyders, put money into my pocket, and take a long ride through the surrounding country. Poor and unfortunate mortals are everywhere to be found; it is only to seek them out."

"Hum! Then I must also have a horse saddled for me," said Peter.

"Well, yes; this was in fact the motive I had in seeking for you. Then you will accompany me?"

"To the end of the world, Jonathan, of course!"

"Very well, then, Peter! forward! we can never do good quickly enough!"

Jonathan asked Mr. Seyders for horses, which were soon ready, and put money, of which there was no scarcity, into his pocket.

"But whither are you going," asked Mr. Seyders.

"Anywhere through the neighborhood," answered Jonathan.

"Then, you will at least take arms with you," said Mr. Seyders. "In our forests you not unfrequently meet with panthers, and the strolling Indians are not always to be trusted."

"The Herr Seyders is right," said Peter, as Jonathan was hesitating to answer. "A gun on the shoulder, and a cutlass at our side is no encumbrance, and in all cases it is better to be prepared. I have already heard of these beasts, the panthers, which are said not to make much ceremony with a man; and although I do not exactly feel afraid, yet I see no harm in being a little provided against emergencies. At any rate, if no panthers should show themselves, we may shoot a few birds for our

dinner, and then, too, we will have a little hunting pleasure extra. Just hand over the guns, Sir, if you please, and two cutlasses or something of the kind."

Jonathan consented to receive the weapons, although he regarded the precautions of Peter as wholly unnecessary ; and in good spirits both rode away on their brisk horses.

Now between fruitful plantations, now through uncultivated regions, which still presented all the primeval charms of a tropical wilderness, they trotted forward at random, as Jonathan had said. At none of the large plantations did they stop, but frequently at solitary, lowly and poor huts that lay scattered through the silent forests. Here they generally dismounted, went into the poor habitations, to make the acquaintance of the inhabitants, and in most cases when they came out again, wives and children followed them with brightened faces and blessed them, looking after them a long while, till horses and riders vanished in the shades of the forest; and when they could be seen no more, many a lip whispered: "Is it not to-day as if angels had turned in with us, to rejoice and bless us !"

Even though Jonathan and Peter did not hear these words, both were nevertheless happy and in good spirits, and did not cease to seek other huts, dismount, enter, and change sorrowful countenances into smiles of joy, till at length Peter, as the sun was near setting, expressed the opinion that they ought to think of returning to Paramaribo, unless Jonathan should have a desire to spend the night in the forest.

"That would not trouble me," answered Jonathan ; "but one thing is true, our riding about can

now do little good, for I must confess to you, Peter, that I have only one solitary gold-piece left in my pocket!"

"All the better," replied Peter, "then you need not feel the lashes of a reproving conscience. Shall we turn toward home?"

"Not so hasty, Peter! How far do you suppose we are from Paramaribo?"

Peter cast a glance around, looked for some point of recognition which might indicate to him his present position, but could see nothing and shook his head thoughtfully.

"Jonathan," said he, "amid all our well-doing, we have entirely forgotten to take notice of the zigzag direction we took. I believe we rode toward all points of the compass, and we may as easily be three miles as fifteen or eighteen from Paramaribo."

"So you do not even know the direction which we must take, in order to reach town by the nearest way?"

"As little as you do, Jonathan! I confess that it just appears to me, as if we were in a very singular fix!"

"Our dilemma is not a difficult one, Peter! To spend one night under the open heavens in this climate I do not regard as a great evil!"

"But what is to be done here, Jonathan! You seem entirely to forget the panthers! and we are here in a very fine wilderness, where a whole dozen of wild cats may be secreted!"

"Right, Peter! But do not fear," answered Jonathan, smiling carelessly. "I do not believe that the Herr Beukelaer has sent us over to Surinam to be torn and eaten by panthers. And now, listen

Peter! we will give our horses the spurs, and ride fast forward for one hour. Perhaps we shall hit the right way, perhaps we may come to some hut or meet some person who may get us on the right course; in that case we shall return to Paramaribo, provided, that we have not wandered entirely too far away from it. But should we not get out of this wilderness, Peter, then we will shoot for ourselves a dozen parrots, pluck them, make a fire, fry and eat them, and for a change spend the night in the primitive forest. The fire will keep the panthers away; and if it comes to the worst, we will put bullets into our gun barrels and shoot them down, if they become too bold. Now, Peter, what think you of that?"

"I think no other way of escape will be left us, and that therefore we will have to resort to your wisdom," answered Peter. "More than this, you will now agree that it was by no means superfluous that we took the guns with us. No guns, no birds!"

"And no defence against panthers," added Jonathan. "I acknowledge that you were a wise man this morning! But what now? Forward! is it not so?"

"Forward!" said Peter, and put his spurs to his horse.

Full one hour both rode in a lively trot through the lonely wood; but their hope of meeting some human beings was not fulfilled. But rather it seemed as if they were getting farther and farther from all human habitations. Jonathan suddenly held in his horse.

"Stop, Peter!" said he, "we only tire our animals without being profited by it in the least.

Circumstances indicate that we are to remain in the wilderness, and so we will remain."

"We will remain!" repeated Peter. "Here is as good a place as any; and in a quarter of a hour the sun will have set. If we wish yet to shoot parrots and prepare for ourselves a supper, we must be about it. Then get quickly down from your horse!"

They dismounted and tied their tired horses to a tree, giving them rope enough, so that they might eat the grass in a considerable circle round the tree, and then prepared their guns for shooting. Twelve to fifteen times, in the next five minutes, the crack of their guns shook the air and awakened the echo of the woods; then both returned from their short excursions, and showed each other their spoils. Jonathan had shot five, Peter eight birds.

"Thirteen in all! An unfortunate number!" said Jonathan. "Whoever is superstitious might believe that there has been a shot too little or one too much."

"Superstitious or not," replied Peter, "in any way, we will keep ourselves in readiness, so that we *can* shoot if it should be necessary."

They loaded their guns anew, and then Jonathan went to work to pick the feathers from the parrots, while Peter made use of the last light of the dusky evening in gathering an armful of dry wood, placing it on a pile and kindling a fire. Soon a bright flame arose, and as there was plenty of wood at hand, in ten minutes the fire burned like a funeral pile. The birds which had meanwhile been cleaned, were spitted upon a ramrod, and put over the fire by two hastily prepared forks of wood, and were soon roasting so nicely, that our lost friends could promise themselves an excellent supper.

While they were mutually relieving each other in turning the spit, the night came fully upon them ; but the full moon at the same time rose beautifully, and poured its bright silver light over the forest. The air was so pure and clear, that the smallest objects could be distinctly seen for twenty or thirty paces around.

" See there, the moon," said Peter, when a little leisure allowed him to look away from the fire. " It shines so brightly that, if we choose to do so, we can go on our uncertain way."

" No, no," answered Jonathan, " I am satisfied here,—am tired, and prefer staying where we are. Night is no friend to man ; and only listen ! our sport about the panthers bids fair to become an earnest matter, for I hear some noise in the woods."

And truly, forest life began to be astir, and deep ominous sounds came from a distance, which bore unmistakable signs of wild beasts not far away.

" It may be merely bull-frogs that make this strange noise," mused Peter, who now, that the danger seemed near him, seemed to become calmer and more deliberate than when it was yet farther off. " But if they are panthers or other wild animals, we have here our guns. Only let them come, Jonathan ! If they are determined to make our further acquaintance they may receive a couple of shots of lead into their heads. But—hark ! what was that ? "

Jonathan must also have heard some unaccustomed sound, for in a moment he had sprung to his feet, and seized his gun. Peter, who was just turning the spit, cast it with the half-roasted parrots to one side, and followed Jonathan's example.

They listened!

On the first yell, which greeted their ears in fearful proximity, followed a cry of anguish from several human throats, then the report of a gun, and at last a wild, almost supernatural shriek, which sounded fearfully on the air.

"There is danger," exclaimed Jonathan,—and without looking whether Peter was following him, he dashed into the thicket; and in less than a minute reached a small, open, moonlit green sward, where a strange and terrible spectacle presented itself to his view.

A horse, striking fearfully around with its hoofs, lay on the ground, and under it its rider, an aged man with grey hair, which seemed to stand like bristles on his head. On the hips of the horse sat a panther, who had struck his claws deep into the jerking muscles of the poor animal, and was tearing the flesh from the upper part of his leg with his teeth. A second panther had siezed the moaning animal by the throat and was holding it down, whilst it vainly struggled to free itself from the blood-thirsty beasts. The rider was apparently unhurt, only he was not able to work himself out from under the horse, which lay with its whole weight on the lower part of his body. That he had thus far escaped the teeth and claws of the panthers, was plainly owing to the fact that they had as yet too much to do with the struggling and pawing animal, which they were scarcely able to keep on the ground. Only a few more minutes and there would have been an end of both horse and rider.

Only a second stood Jonathan as if powerless before the dreadful sight, which bewildered his

eyes and caused the blood to stand still in his veins. Then he suddenly collected himself, sprang ten steps forward, near to the panther who was tearing the flesh from the leg of the horse with his claws, and without taking notice of any thing else around him, placed the muzzle of his gun to his ear, and pulled the trigger. The panther tumbled over as if struck by lightning; but at the explosion of the gun the other wild beast raised himself up, sent forth a fearful howl, opened his blood-red yawning jaws, showing his grinning teeth in the moonlight, and made a spring upon the disturber of his bloody meal. Jonathan threw himself backwards; but his attempt to save himself would hardly have succeeded, had not, at the same moment, the report of Peter's gun been heard. In the very act of bounding on his prey the panther fell, and his blood poured forth from his wound. The ball from Peter's gun had broken his back bone, and thus deprived him of the power of making a spring. He raised himself, however, with his fore feet, and turned his broad spotted head, with a fearful howl, towards his courageous assailants who had entered so abruptly into his play.

"We must make an end of him!" exclaimed Peter to his friend. "If the beast should get his eye on the poor rider, who lies helplessly on the ground not a step from him, he will crush his head with one snap of his terrible mouth!"

Jonathan had already observed the danger in which the venerable man lay. He drew his cutlas, made at the panther fearlessly, and thrust the strong blade into his throat. It was a successful stroke. Before Peter, who stood full twenty steps

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away, could come to his assistance, the panther's angry bellowing had been changed into a low gurgling noise; he tumbled over, and with the blood streaming from his mouth his life ebbed fast away.

"Jonathan, this was help at the right time!" exclaimed Peter, as he gave the fallen panther another stab in the throat with his cutlas—"five seconds more, and there would have been an end, not only of the poor horse, but also of the old man."

"For God's sake," said the old man, with weak voice, "release me first of all from my painful position under the weight of the horse."

"It shall be done, aged friend," said Peter, while Jonathan had already laid his hand to the work. "So! And so! And so! So now—how do you feel!"

The old man returned no answer. The fright which he had endured in the midst of his fearful danger, together with the pain he had suffered, had robbed him of his senses. Jonathan kneeled down by his side, laid the head of the venerable man on his lap, and poured a few drops of wine into his mouth. This means of strengthening him had a speedy effect; after a few minutes he opened his eyes, and gently pressed Jonathan's hand.

"Thanks! thanks! my young friend," said he. "You have delivered me from a terrible fate. To be torn to pieces by a panther—great God!"

"Now, old friend, you need not shudder any longer," said Peter. "All danger, God be praised, is now over! Here lie the beasts, and not a muscle in them moves any more. At the same time, I feel a little unpleasant here; we ought to return to our fire. What think you, Jonathan?"

"Certainly, that will be best," answered Jonathan. "Do you think, old friend, you can walk a hundred paces? If not, we will carry you on our arms."

"It is not necessary; I already feel much better; and besides, my negroes, who started back the moment the panthers assailed me, cannot be far away. Jupiter!" he called. "Jupiter! Vulcan! cowardly rascals that you are, where do you tarry?"

There was a noise in the bushes near by, and two negroes on fine horses and armed with weapons, came hesitatingly out into the little green spot.

"Mercy, Massa!" said the one, trembling. "Panther-beast so wild, Jupiter think he tear all to pieces!"

"All right, all right," replied the old man. "I know you well, and know that you will not stand ground before a panther. Had not these active young men come to my aid I would have been lost!"

"Oh, Massa," cried both negroes—"we in all life-time not get comfor den; we loss so good Massa. But panther *so* wild, *so* big eyes, *so* wide mouf! Fearful, Massa! Had to run, eben wen not want to."

"Very well, then I will forgive you," answered the old man. "But now, down from your horses! Take me up and follow these young men. The fire which I saw shining through the bushes cannot be far off?"

"Only a hundred paces," answered Jonathan. "And it burns brightly enough to secure us against a second attack!"

The negroes dismounted, took up their master

carefully and carried him after Jonathan, while Peter followed with the horses. In a few minutes they reached the place of encampment, and when the old man had been laid softly on the grass, and the horses were tied, Peter took up the spit from the ground where he had cast it, and coolly resumed the work of turning it over the fire. Meanwhile Jonathan, according to the best of his ability, provided comforts for the old man, who had very speedily recovered from his fright and injuries, which, as it now appeared, did not extend beyond several bruises.

"Jupiter, Vulcan," said he—"haste! kindle a few more fires in the neighborhood, and bring the horses also into a safe place. We cannot know what may come," added he, turning towards Jonathan. "The howl of the dying panthers might gather in others, and I feel not the least desire, after the first experiment, to risk another encounter with the ferocious beasts."

"No doubt of that," answered Jonathan. "But how came you to fall in with them?"

"Easily enough," answered the old man. "This morning early I rode out to oversee one of my plantations, and was just on my return when I heard discharges of guns, no doubt while you were shooting these birds. Curiosity drew me a little out of my way, and soon I saw your fire through the darkness. No doubt the reports and the fire attracted the panthers; for suddenly, as I was riding along, both of them assailed me at once behind and before, pulled down my poor horse, which caused me to fall under it. I discharged my gun at them but missed, and my negroes, instead of assisting me, with cries of fear, fled.

This is the whole story. Had you not come to my rescue, I would now be a corpse, and would have found a hateful grave in the bodies of these panthers! These rogues of negroes never stand ground before a panther—and *here* were *two!* I cannot even be angry with them; and to *you* I owe the deepest gratitude. And now, your names, my young friends? I must know who has placed me under such great obligation."

"My name is Jonathan Monkenwyk, and this is my true and trusty friend, Peter Hemskerk."

"Monkenwyk? Monkenwyk? Is it possible?" answered the old man, raising himself up, considerably animated, "Monkenwyk from Amsterdam?"

"Yes, from Amsterdam," replied Jonathan. "Is my name familiar to you?"

"The name certainly, and perhaps even the person also, at least your father! what was he?"

"Merchant," said Jonathan. "There was only one of his name in Amsterdam."

"Surely! yes; then it is he, the friend of my youth! Do you not know Knievel? Knievel? You must have heard this name!"

"O certainly, I remember," said Jonathan earnestly. "My good sainted father often spoke of him as the best beloved friend of his youth; but, if I mistake not, he told me he lived in Brazil?"

"Quite correct, quite right; there I had also several plantations; but I did not like that country as a permanent place of residence, and I removed to Surinam. This, of course, my good friend Monkenwyk could not have known. But he is dead, you say? Dead? And you are here? What brings you to Surinam, and into this wilderness? Your father was rich, very rich!"

"He was rich, but died and left nothing for me," answered Jonathan. "After his death I had to earn my bread in the house of a stranger, and was sent hither to attend to some business entrusted to me, which, however, is satisfactorily arranged. I shall soon return to Holland."

"Dead! My good old friend Monkenwyk dead! And his son under the necessity of being a servant of another!" said old Mr. Knievel to himself. "No, no, no! This must not, shall not be. You will not immediately return to Holland; and I hope you will first go home with me and make me a visit of a few weeks or months. No denial, young friend! I am an old stubborn man, and what I desire, must in all cases be done. The savior of my life, and at the same time the son of my best friend, must not go hence, without taking with him some tokens of my love and gratitude. The matter is decided!"

"And the birds are roasted!" added Peter in a humorous tone. "Accept the invitation without much reflection, Jonathan. One does not thus meet an old friend of one's father in the primal forest, afford him aid, and then, an hour afterward, leave him again. We will go with you, Sir, most certainly. This is decided, as you very well remarked; and now, help yourself; it is said that parrots do not taste badly, and these are so excellently brown as if the greatest adept in cooking had roasted them on the spit."

Not without reason did Peter praise his skill in cooking; and even Mr. Knievel thought, that upon the whole, it was a pleasanter business to eat parrots than to be eaten by wild panthers! They ate, and also drank with a hunter's relish; and before

the birds were quite consumed, Jonathan had given his promise to accompany Mr. Knieval to his plantation, on this condition however, that his friend and host at Paramaribo should be immediately informed of the reason of his detention. Mr. Knieval promised to have this attended to; and on the following day our friends found themselves on the plantation of the old gentleman, and in his house, which resembled more a palace than the residence of a private man. Here, too, they discovered that Mr. Knieval had neither wife, children, nor any relatives; and Peter had his own thoughts in regard to these things!

"Who knows what all this may signify?" said he to himself. "The fourteenth shot which Jonathan fired, appears to have hit specially well, and the two panthers were not a bad Christmas present for the Herr Knieval. Let us see what will grow out of this whole affair!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE RETURN HOME.

Once more the winter was approaching, and with it the beloved Christmas festival, when on a stormy November evening, two men were going along the streets of Rotterdam, and nearing the house of Mr. Cornelius Beukelaer. Notwithstanding the darkness which was already gathering around them, they knew well how to find their way, and stood at length before a stately three-story house, the entrance of which was illuminated by two large lanterns which stood on iron lamp-posts.

"Here it is!" said one of the two men. "Although nearly twelve years have passed since I last entered this door, it is as familiar to me as if I had gone daily out and in. "What think you, Jonathan? Will the Herr Beukelaer easily recognize us?"

"I doubt it much," answered the other. "But let us enter, I long to shake the old gentleman's hands to whom we owe all our good fortune."

The first made no reply, but stepped quickly into the house, opened a door and led his companion into a light, high-arched room in the first story of the house. They found themselves in the business place of the wealthy Beukelaer and asked the chief book-keeper whether they could speak to the proprietor.

„It is now late, he has already withdrawn, and in that case he does not easily allow himself to be disturbed," was the answer of the book-keeper, "still, if your business is very urgent, then——"

"It is so urgent that we cannot delay a moment," replied one of the strangers. "Announce us to him, I beseech you, and I will stand for the consequences."

The book-keeper measured both of them with a hasty glance, and as he very well saw that he had to do with men of respectability and weight, he made no further objection, but only asked, "Whom shall I announce?"

"A couple of old friends from Surinam, who have only an hour ago landed in the harbor," was the reply.

The book-keeper withdrew, but in a few moments returned, and led the two strangers into the private room of Mr. Beukelaer. He had thrown back the shades of his lamp, and looked with earnest

expectation on the two strangers, who came smilingly toward him, whilst the book-keeper withdrew, and respectfully shut the door after him.

"You do not know me, then, Sir," said the younger of the two, whilst he placed himself so that the light from the lamp fell full into his face.

Mr. Beukelaer shook his head, doubtingly. He saw before him a tall, slim young man, with large, sparkling black eyes, a heavy beard which shaded mouth and chin, and a deeply tanned skin, which plainly showed the effect of a long residence under a tropical sun.

"Really," he said, at last, "I cannot recollect. If I have ever had the honor of your acquaintance it must have been a long while ago."

"Yes, pretty long ago, nearly a dozen years," replied the stranger with the same smile. "And this, my companion, you also do not know?"

Mr. Beukelaer cast a glance on the second stranger and shook his head again.

"Very well," said the first, "then you remember at least, that about twelve years ago you sent a messenger to Paramaribo, in order——"

"Yes, yes, certainly," interrupted Mr. Beukelaer abruptly, "Jonathan Monkenwyk! Do you know anything of him? Did he send you to me? Then you are heartily welcome. How is he getting along? And the good lad Peter? The last intelligence I had of them was from the plantation of a Mr. Knieval, to whom both had rendered a great service—saved his life, and so forth. Pray! What have you to communicate to me from them? I esteem them both very highly, especially the young Monkenwyk, to whom I owe many thanks."

"And he owes no less to you," said the stranger,

with much feeling. "But is it possible, that a few years in a tropical climate could so change me and my companion, that you should not know us? Can you not guess, most respected Sir? I bring you a thousand greetings from Mr. Seyders in Paramaribo!"

"Thanks, thanks! But nothing from Jonathan? Nothing at all?"

"My good Sir! Jonathan stands in bodily form before you, and this is Peter Hemskerk, your former warehouse superintendent and my good friend."

Mr. Beukelaer gave forth a shriek of surprise, reached out both hands toward Jonathan, surveyed once more their sunburnt faces, and now gradually recognized them.

"Thousand, thousand times welcome, my good Jonathan! Heartily welcome, Peter!" he exclaimed, and embraced the young men with very great joy. "But who could have thought this! Such a surprise! True, twelve years and a tropical sun! This changes one's appearance, and it is no wonder that I did not know you at once. Of course, you must stay with me," he continued, while he pulled the bell, "I will immediately order the chamber to be made ready! Dear, dear me, what a surprise! But what brings you here from Surinam, you good-for-nothing Jonathan, that you did not let yourself be heard from for so many years?"

"What brings me here?" answered Jonathan earnestly. "The natural longing to see my home once more, and the desire to render *reward.*"

"Reward?"

"Yes, reward for all the good and the evil that was bestowed on me in the days of my youth!"

"Ah, yes, I understand, my dear Jonathan, then you will no doubt have many an account to arrange and conclude," said Mr. Beukelaer. "But how goes it with you, my friend? I hope well? You can speak to me without reserve, for you well know we are old friends, and for such friends I have always an open place in my house!"

"Thank you, good Sir," replied Jonathan, "I expected nothing else; and for the present, that is this night, is it not so, Peter? we will have to remain on your hands?"

"That is pretty of you, Jonathan," said Mr. Beukelaer, rejoicingly. "But now, first of all, make yourselves at home, children! Ay, and here now, my old housekeeper brings the evening luncheon—here Ursula bring it forward and place it on the sofa-table!—and now, whilst we enjoy ourselves a bit, you will relate to me how fortune has used you, my dear Jonathan! I suppose yours will be pretty nearly the same as Peter's, for you were not far separated from each other?"

"You have hit it exactly, dear Sir," answered Peter, well pleased. "In this respect all things stand as they did twelve years ago. Wherever Jonathan is, Peter is not far off."

"Thought it must be so!" said Mr. Beukelaer. "But now, Jonathan, I am very curious. Relate, relate to me!"

"It is not much that I have to relate, although it is important enough for Peter and myself," answered Jonathan. "As you received my last letter, in which I wrote you how a fortunate shot saved him, who afterwards became my truly paternal benefactor, from a fearful death from the claws and teeth of two panthers, I can pass over all the rest

and begin at once at that point. Mr. Knieval took Peter and me with him to his plantation, where we remained as visitors from one week to another, when Mr. Knieval at length, as we were making earnest preparations to return to Paramaribo, declared to us plainly that he had learned to love us, and would on no account permit us to leave, as we had nothing in Europe to interest us, and had not even any near relations there. This was of course all true, for not long before this we had received the intelligence in Paramaribo from Holland that Peter's father had died, and I also stood as one alone in the world. The kind encouragement of Mr. Knieval, the real paternal tenderness which he manifested especially to me, finally determined my decision. I promised to remain, and as soon as I had distinctly declared my purpose, Peter also hesitated not a moment, but said quaintly: "Where Jonathan remains, Peter remains also!"

"Very naturally," said Mr. Beukelaer.

"I communicated my determination to Mr. Seyders in Paramaribo, wrote also to you, at once, that I would not leave Surinam for several years; received your reply, in which you approved of my decision and wished me good luck in my new position, and thus all was so far arranged. But very indifferent order and arrangement did we find on the plantation of Mr. Knieval; and I soon discovered that both Peter and I, could be of some service to him. True, Mr. Knieval was very rich, had very extensive lands, and about eighty slaves to till them; but his overseers neglected their duty, treated the slaves harshly, and failed to bring them to regular and orderly service. Mr. Knieval did not concern himself much about his plantations,

for he had wealth enough, and had neither children nor other relations that seemed near to him. Hence he let things take their own way, and Peter and I soon saw that he was being shamelessly deceived and cheated. Here then was a field of useful activity for us. We gradually exposed his robbers, who were promptly discharged, interested ourselves in the poor slaves, exercised a personal oversight in their behalf, in every respect improved their neglected condition, and in two years succeeded in doubling the proceeds of the plantation. In four years it was found to be in the most flourishing condition, and the slaves of Mr. Knieval were regarded as in the happiest condition of any in Surinam. I believe properly so. For they were always cheerful and in good humor, and loved their master like children their father."

"It was no wonder then, Mr. Beukelaer," said Peter, interrupting the remarks of Jonathan. "You should have seen how carefully Jonathan watched over the poor slaves, how he had good and pleasant huts constructed for them, whereas before they had to encamp in stable-like sheds, how he assigned to each head of a family a piece of land for his own use, how he cared for the sick, and how he provided for them a Christmas festival every year, of which the poor creatures in former years had not even the least conception. Yes, these Christmas times! These Christmas times! This was always a festival, good Mr. Beukelaer, during which one's heart laughed in one's body! Music, eating, drinking, and all full of cheer, and then the distribution of presents on Christmas-eve! Great and small together—a hundred and twenty negroes, with forty, fifty, sixty little picca-

ninies, all in the large hall of the Herr Knieval, and on a hundred tables young sweet-pine fruits, dates, with lights, and presents for every wooly-head; red kerchiefs, ribbons, play-things, jacks and knaves,—a true delight, dear Mr. Beukelaer! and then the shouting and singing of the negroes—all ran, danced, jumped around the tables, men and women, old persons and children, all was one heart, one soul, one song of praise. I declare, great times were there; and I saw how more than once the bright tears stood in the eyes of the Herr Knieval—pure tears of joy, rolling down over his cheeks! Yes, Jonathan knew how to arrange things of this kind; and he did it gladly. Christmas-eve was, and has ever remained, to him the happiest evening of the year—and of course, he had reason to hold Christmas in high estimation, for, to it he is indebted."

"What? for what is he indebted?" asked Mr. Beukelaer with animation.

"Well, first of all, that we have become such good friends," continued Peter, after a little reflection, laughing. "My friendship, it is very true, does not amount to much,—but, nevertheless, if I had not so heartily loved Jonathan, I would not have thought of bringing him hither to you, good Mr. Beukelaer. And why did I love him? Because he has such an excellent heart! And then also because—it was such a good, such a blessed vow, that Jonathan made!"

"What kind of a vow?" asked Mr. Beukelaer again. "I hear nothing but new things here."

"Well, that vow which he made on that Christmas-eve, that he would do at least *some* good, and make at least *one person* happy, on each returning

Christmas," answered Peter, while Jonathan was silent. "This vow he made for himself in his childhood, and nobly has he kept it, and richly has God rewarded him for it!"

"Yes, how then? Quite right!" said Mr. Beukelaer. "I remember, this was the reason which induced me to send him to my friend in Surinam. On that Christmas-eve, yes, yes, then it was that I found out his good heart."

"Exactly so," said Peter, further. "And afterwards, it was also on a Christmas-day, and on account of this vow, that he explored with me the region round Paramaribo, making the piccaninies happy in their huts, and afterwards shot the panther! Had he remained at home on the dear Christmas-day, had he forgotten what he had vowed in his childhood, then . . . But only go on, Jonathan, with your history, for we are getting quite away from the story."

"Quite right, Peter; and it was on the whole quite superfluous that you interrupted me," replied Jonathan, a little confused by the many praises that had been lavished upon him. "Short and sweet—the plantation of Mr. Knieval produced extraordinarily, his great wealth doubled itself, and every thing went on admirably, till suddenly my paternal friend was overtaken with severe sickness. We called in the best physicians from Paramaribo and the whole vicinity; all the negroes prayed for the return of health to their excellent master. Peter and myself nursed him with unwearied care; our earnest wishes and prayers were not heard. God had otherwise decided. Mr. Knieval died, and we wept at his grave. To me it seemed as if I had for the second time lost a kind father!"

"Poor Jonathan," said Mr. Buckelaer with sympathy, as Jonathan paused, overcome by his feelings. "And then it came to pass that you were no longer needed on the plantation, the heirs dismissed you, and you had to return to Europe. Well, here also you have a paternal friend, who sincerely loves you, Jonathan. To my heart, my dear young friend!"

"Thank you, Mr. Beukelaer," said Jonathan, as he warmly and tenderly embraced the old gentleman. "Thank you for your kindness. But as to the circumstances, they were, however, a little different from what you suppose. The day after the burial of this my second father, there came officers from Paramaribo, with the Will and Testament which Mr. Knieval had there deposited a year before his death, and the Governor himself accompanied them. Orders were given to call together all who belonged to the plantation. They came into the large hall, where we had celebrated so many a happy Christmas, and here now, when all were present, overseers, slaves, men and women, the Testament was opened. Think of my surprise, my feelings, my gratitude, Mr. Beukelaer; my sainted paternal friend made me sole heir of all his unnumbered wealth, and as a special legacy he gave our Peter a beautiful neigbboring plantation which he had purchased shortly before his death, besides all appurtenances, with forty negroes, all the cash on hand at the time, and in general, all that was found on it. Tears flowed from my eyes—Peter cried like a child; and so did our negroes—and this rejoiced my very heart —praised God aloud, that I should be their new master, whilst the Governor wished Peter and

me, success, and congratulated us for having to such an extent won the love of Mr. Knieval."

"Hey-day, my dear Jonathan," said Mr. Beukelaer, quite affected. "After such a turn of affairs I will not forget also to add my congratulations. God bless you, Jonathan! And you also, Peter. Dear me, I am quite overwhelmed with emotion, joy and surprise! Then you are both rich, and need not my assistance."

"Not your assistance, Mr. Beukalaer?" replied Jonathan with warmth; "but still your former kindness and friendship, and your pleasant sym pathy!"

"These you have, Jonathan!" exclaimed Mr. Beukelaer, and embraced his young friend anew. "These you have with all my heart, and with all my soul. And you no less, Peter; for you always manifested a good and true spirit. I rejoice, children, that you have made your fortunes in a distant land. And what a fortune, Jonathan! He must indeed have left considerable property?"

"That he has; and I hope I shall be able to use it in his spirit," answered Jonathan.

"But how is it that you are here, and *both* at the same time?" asked Mr. Beukelaer. "Have you sold the plantations?"

"Well—yes, and no, as one may take it," said Peter. "A good part of the land Jonathan divided, presented to each slave family and to every single slave as much as he can use, removed their huts on it, and finally, on last Christmas he gave every slave his freedom! Very naturally I could not do anything else but follow his example, and on New Year's day we carried out the second act in this pleasant play on my plantation. The remain-

der of both plantations, lands, buildings, machinery and so forth, were sold, and—here we are!"

"To every slave his freedom, and land besides!" exclaimed Mr. Beukelaer. "But this is an immense sacrifice!"

"O no, dear Sir, it is a gain for me," answered Jonathan earnestly. "I have myself obtained my freedom by this means; and when I think of the joy of the poor negroes, when the chains of their bondage were broken—when I think how happy every one was made by his little possessions, I bless, and will ever bless the hour, when God inspired me with the thought to declare these slaves free men. It was a beautiful Christmas festival, perhaps the happiest one of my life."

"Still your wealth has been not a little reduced by this Christmas act, my dear friend," suggested Mr. Beukelaer.

"The most secure wealth is that which we have in the form of contentment of heart," answered Jonathan pleasantly. "And as for the rest—only ask Peter. He will tell you that we have still an abundance. Mr. Knievel had a large amount of money on interest, and our plantations sold well. No, no, friend Beukelaer, do not fear. We can comfortably await the coming Christmas; we are not in want of means to dry yet many tears, and make many poor and needy persons happy. And now, my friend, several questions. Have you never heard anything of an old secretary of my sainted father, the honest Vanderhaans?"

"Never, Jonathan."

"Nor yet of his excellent housekeeper, the honest Liese Crabetje?"

"Never, Jonathan! How should I?"

"Still, still, it might have been possible," answered Jonathan; "for before I went to Surinam, I wrote to Vanderhaan, and advised him to apply to you in case he or Liese should at any time have need of friendly assistance."

"He never applied to me, Jonathan."

"So, then let us hope that it goes well with both of them. But now, a last question: How goes it with the Mappels in Amsterdam?"

"The rogues, who have cheated you, Jonathan? Well, as much as I know, still just about as before. At least my correspondents in Amsterdam have reported nothing special in regard to them, which they certainly would have done, had any change taken place."

"Very well, then, we will have to see and seek with our own eyes," said Jonathan. "To-morrow we will leave for Amsterdam—is it not so, Peter?"

Peter bowed assent; but Mr. Beukelaer would listen to nothing of the kind. But Jonathan did not suffer himself to be turned from his purpose.

"We shall return again," he said with much earnestness. "First of all, however, I must perform a sacred duty, the duty of rendering reward! God has placed me in a condition to do this duty, and the Lord shall not find his servant unfaithful! But no word beforehand to your correspondents in Amsterdam in regard to my return. I return as Mr. Knievel, and until the hour for bestowing reward has struck, no one shall suspect who conceals himself under this name."

Mr. Beukelaer saw that the purpose of his young friend was fixed, and urged him no more. The next morning Jonathan and Peter started for Amsterdam, where, without any further intima-

tion, they soon safely arrived, putting up at one of the best hotels. The public register the next day contained as new arrivals the names: "Mynheer Knieval and attendant from Surinam." No one could suspect that Jonathan Monkenwyk had, under this name, returned to his native city.

CHAPTER VII.

MYNHEER SEYBEL.

There were now only a few days before Christmas would again return. Without, the snow whirled in large flakes, the storm blew cold from the northwest, and once again, as many years before, Jonathan sat at the window and gazed thoughtfully out into the agitated elements, which reminded him in so lively a manner of his childhood, and the first Christmas which he had ever consciously enjoyed. That happy time came up before him softly gilded in the mellow glass of memory with all its earnest expectations and fulfilled hopes, and he would perhaps yet a long while have thought and dreamed of them, had not Peter started him from the reverie of his feelings. But Peter entered the room hastily, shook the snow from his hat and clothes, and exclaimed aloud: "Victory, Jonathan! We have them! But what is the matter with you? you look dark and sad?"

"No, no, Peter, at most only a little lonely," replied Jonathan. "Let it not distress you; I was only thinking of bygone days, and of past vows. But why do you cry victory? Have you at length discovered some indication?"

"More, Jonathan, more!" replied Peter. "They *themselves*, I have!"

"Whom? My old Vanderhaan?"

"Quite right! your old Vanderhaan, together with your old, good, honest Liese!"

"What good fortune!" exclaimed Jonathan, and sprang to his feet rejoiced, whilst he gave all sad thoughts to the sea of forgetfulness. "But is it really true, Peter? After all our unsuccessful search, and all our idle conjectures?"

"Yes, yes, yes; at last they are found!" said Peter, triumphantly. "And do you know where they live, both of them? In one of the remotest streets in the distant suburbs. And do you know what they are doing? They have rented a little store-room, and are selling all kinds of little notions; pots, sewing-thread, pickled cucumbers, old iron, and the dear knows what more."

"And how are they getting along, Peter? How are they getting along?"

"Well, only middling, Jonathan. I think your Christmas festival will be a joyful one this time? The poor old souls sustain themselves, but of course very poorly. I have made inquiries of the neighbors. Heard nothing of importance except praise, and pity that they are so very poor."

"All right, Peter! God be praised that *we* are rich. But how did you find them at last?"

"In a very simple way, by means to which we should long since have resorted. I went to the police, spoke to the chief, promised a few ducats to him who should find them for us; and scarcely two hours later I had the pleasure of relieving myself of ten ducats to one of the policemen."

"Excellent, Peter! Now only get that Notary,

Seybel! You should at the same time have asked after him. A thousand ducats would I give to find out the rogue."

"Ten are enough, Jonathan," answered Peter, smiling. "I have him already, the rogue, the Notary!"

"Impossible, Peter!"

"Well, then, I will have to confirm my words," said Peter. "He is outside in the reception room, if you would speak to him!"

"Dear, dear me! Peter; you overwhelm me with your surprising news! How did you find him?"

"Well, my ten ducats pleased the shrewd policeman, and I opened to him the prospect of ten more. An hour afterwards our Notary was found."

"This I call news. And then?"

"Then I enquired after his condition, and heard that he was in circumstances of the greatest poverty. Then I took my friend of the police as my guide, and made my way to Mynheer Seybel, told him that a very rich man, the Herr Knievel, from Surinam, wished to see him about some matters, promised him at the same time some ducats, and made anew the observation that a few ducats can produce a wonderful effect. Mynheer Seybel at once manifested his readiness to accompany me, and—outside he waits."

"He did not know you, Peter?"

"By no means! As little as he will know you. Ten years in the tropics changes faces."

"Very well, bring him in, Peter, We must try to bring him to a confession, for without him we can do nothing with the Mappels. Bring him in, Peter."

Peter brought the Notary. Seybel never was

blessed with a very commendatory exterior, but now he looked absolutely frightful as an image of misery, poverty, and ruin. Jonathan measured him with a searching glance, gave him a chair, and then asked briefly :

" Do you know me, sir ?"

" I suppose the Herr Knievel ; did you not say so, sir ?"

" Quite right," replied Jonathan, well satisfied, for he saw at once that Seybel did not recognize him. " Listen to me : I had in Surinam a friend, who was not in the very best circumstances. His name was Monkenwyk, Jonathan Monkenwyk. Do you recollect this name ?"

" Yes, I remember it ; very well do I remember it," repeated the Notary earnestly. " I wish he were here !"

" Why do you wish this ?"

" Because I would make him rich ! Rich, sir. As rich as David and Philip Mappel are ! Yes, that I would. So help me God ! And the Mappels should learn to know me, the rogues."

" So ; I see we shall understand each other, Mr. Seybel," said Jonathan. " My friend communicated some strange things to me in relation to the Mappels ; he even contended that the Mappels had cheated him out of all his inheritance, and also slandered the memory of his father after he was in his grave, by asserting that the old Mr. Monkenwyk was at his death a bankrupt."

" So it is. Just so," exclaimed the Notary in a bitter tone. " The Mappels did cheat him, rob him, cast him out of his father's house, and heap slanders on his father. The Mappels did it, and I,—I can prove it. I *will* prove it. I will cast

them down into the dust of humiliation, these Mappels, who have rewarded me with the most shameful ingratitude!"

"This you will do, Mr. Notary? Really?"

"Yes, I swear it, I will do it. Only bring me Jonathan Monkenwyk. Let him come! I will discover all to him. He shall again have his house, his fortune, the reputation of his father, and the Mappels shall be cast out of Amsterdam as beggars and culprits, if only Mr. Monkenwyk will shield me!"

"In what way shield you?" asked Jonathan.

"Well," continued Seybel, "if I reveal the rascality of David and Philip Mappel, I will at the same time reveal my own, and expose myself to the same danger with them, namely, to be imprisoned for life. This it is that has hitherto sealed my mouth. David Mappel knows it well, and for this reason he has never fulfilled his promises by which he first brought me into the wicked forgery."

"Then there was forgery in the matter!" said Jonathan.

"Yes, a forgery—as wicked a forgery as there ever was," replied Seybel. "Bring me Jonathan Monkenwyk, induce him to allow me a small sum, just enough to keep me in bread in my old age, and I will make a full confession."

"But this will still place you in a dangerous position."

"No, not if Mr. Monkenwyk will give me time, after my confession, to flee from Holland to France. There I will be safe."

"Still you would have to make your statements before legal witnesses!"

"That I will do. That I will do! But before they can take me I will be up and off."

"And how much do you wish to provide for your wants in the future?"

"Two thousand ducats. Not more. It is only the fifth part of what David Mappel promised me, when he prevailed on me to make out forged documents; but I will be satisfied with this, if only this Mappel shall receive the reward due him. He has cheated me—not a penny did he pay me, and when I threatened him, he cast me out of his house with a laugh of derision! He well knew that I dare not reveal anything without implicating myself, and on this he staked all. But bring me Mr. Monkenwyk, and Mappel shall yet tremble before me!"

"Well then, Mr. Seybel, look carefully at me," said Jonathan now, and stood erect before the astonished man, "I myself am Jonathan Monkenwyk!"

Seybel sprang up, as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his side.

"Ah, you are deceiving me, as Mappel did!" he exclaimed in fear. "You allured me in here, to call out my secrets before a witness, to bring me to ruin. But it shall not benefit you. I was only joking. All is a lie. I have said nothing!"

"Peter, quickly, two thousand ducats," said Jonathan, "to convince the Notary that we have by no means set a trap for him. Here, Sir Notary," he continued, as he laid the ducats before him, "convince yourself that I intend no deceit. And you, Peter, fetch the most celebrated jurists in Amsterdam. I have no doubt that Mr. Seybel will now repeat his confessions in their presence."

Abashed, the Notary stared at him. At length he said, "I have said it, and I will stand by it! But Mynheer Monkenwyk, you know the second stipulation—an unhindered flight to France!"

"I have not forgotten that promise. Peter, an express coach must be provided and kept in readiness at the back door of the hotel. Your travelling expenses, Sir Notary, I will pay, and after you have made your statements in full, I shall add one thousand ducats more. Are you satisfied now?"

"I am, Mynheer. And that you may assure yourself that I am, take this card, the names of the three best jurists in Amsterdam are written upon it."

"Take the card, Peter," said Jonathan, "and," he added softly, "ask the landlord whether the names are good. We must not trust a rogue too far, even when he promises to be honest. Do you understand? Now, a post-chaise and the jurists!"

Peter vanished.

"And now, Mynheer," began Seybel, "give me pen and paper. I will without delay write down my revelations, and make matters so plain as to confirm my words against them. I acted the rascal toward you, now I will endeavour to set things right again."

Jonathan gave him what he desired, and the Notary wrote earnestly and without interruption, till Peter, in about an hour, returned with the jurists. Jonathan explained to them the business, and they at once declared themselves prepared to aid him in unraveling the rascality of David Mappel. Meanwhile Mr. Seybel had finished his statements, handed it to one of the legal gentlemen who read it aloud. His confessions were particular,

comprehensive, clear, plain and decided. Seybel had named every document that had been forged and that all those papers had been prepared after the death of old Mr. Monkenwyk; that false dates and forged signatures had been attached to them, and that they were consequently illegal and invalid.

"This acknowledgment is fully sufficient to convict David Mappel as a notorious swindler," said the oldest of the attorneys after the paper had been slowly and distinctly read. "He must not only restore all the property of the deceased Mr. Monkenwyk to his son, but also pay all the costs, which will no doubt far exceed his means. Besides this, he is wholly in your power, Mr. Jonathan Monkenwyk. You can now, or at any time, cause him to be arrested. But in like manner also this Seybel, who was his assistant, and is his accessory in this business."

"I promised to save him from punishment," said Jonathan. "But nothing in advance. Will the gentlemen attorneys now have the goodness to confirm the statement of Mr. Seybel?"

The document was confirmed and sealed.

Meanwhile Jonathan gave the Notary an additional thousand ducats, and also a hint softly and hastily to make good his escape. Seybel understood the hint and vanished. Two minutes later the rattling of a wagon was heard outside in the street going off with a gallop, and Jonathan indicated his satisfaction by a smile.

"Here is the document signed and sealed, Mr. Monkenwyk," said one of the jurists. "I congratulate you, for your case against the rascally Mappel is fully secured. But one thing more. My

conscience hardly permits me to let the Notary Seybel go free. He acted like a rogue and must be punished. Where is he?"

"In a four-horse courier coach on the way to the border, sir," answered Jonathan. "He has done all he could in his circumstances—let him go. I for my part forgive him what evil he has done me."

As the bird had already flown, the three jurists also declared themselves satisfied, and after Jonathan had richly rewarded them for their trouble, they withdrew with a respectful bow. Jonathan taking up the principal document, triumphantly said, "Now, Peter, I look forward with joy to the next Christmas! That will be a festival, such as I have never yet lived to see: A FESTIVAL FOR THE REWARD OF THE GOOD, AND THE EVIL! And now, Peter, let us speak further on this subject."

They continued their conversation, and it was drawing towards midnight before they concluded their arrangements, which were of the highest interest to both.

CHAPTER VIII.

YET ANOTHER CHRISTMAS.

AT the fourth hour of the twenty-fourth day of December, 18..., in a small house in the remotest suburb of Amsterdam, an old man and an old woman, both still active and in good health, sat opposite each other in a very small store of the poorest kind, the little counter between them. They looked at each other with sad and depressed

countenances. Twilight had already cast its shadows through the small panes of the shop window —shadows which threatened very soon to pass into complete darkness, as the window was filled with various kinds of articles, which almost shut out the full light of day. Papers of tobacco, strings, shoe-brushes, matches, stood and hung around to attract purchasers, who were not very plenty in this distant suburb of the city. During the whole afternoon the bell of the shop door had been heard at most only four or five times, and for the last half hour the door had not been opened.

"What think you," said the woman at length, breaking the silence which had been undisturbed for a good long while, "shall I not light the lamp?"

"The lamp, Crabetje!" replied the man. "And what for? For the customers will not come, anxiously as we may await them? No, no, Crabetje, we must save our oil!"

The good old lady sighed heavily. "A sad Christmas, my good Vanderhaan!" said she. "So sad as I have never yet seen it When I call to mind the old times, when the Herr Monkenwyk was yet living! Then all was light, joy, and rejoicing; and to-day—not even an oil lamp to brighten up our poverty!"

"That is true, Crabetje," replied the former secretary of Mr. Monkenwyk. "We cannot riot in abundance like David Mappel and Company But I would not exchange with them, Crabetje. A good conscience on the holy Christmas-eve is of more value than all the treasures of the world!"

"Quite right, my good Vanderhaan. They want a good conscience, but we want so many things."

"Nearly everything, Crabetje! Our business fares badly, and is not sufficient to bring us dry bread. Hem! At last I will have to write to the Herr Beukelaer, that we may not starve, Crabetje. Who knows, perhaps, but he can also give us some information about Jonathan, our young friend."

Crabetje sighed again. "Alas! where may he be?" said she. "Vanished and perished, perhaps; unknown in a strange land, he has died of yellow fever. Did you not once say, my good Vanderhaan, that in Surinam the yellow fever carries away many, many persons?"

"Very true, Crabetje, many, but still not *all!* Jonathan is not necessarily among the many. I still cannot give up the hope that we shall some day see him again, Crabetje!"

"In heaven, perhaps," she replied sadly, "But now it is quite dark. Really, I must light the lamp."

"Then light it! light it, Crabetje, although I am convinced that the light of the lamp will attract no purchasers."

"Ah, who knows," she replied, as she was lighting a match and approaching the lamp. "Hark, ye! A wagon! I hear it roll in the distance, and it is coming toward our house!"

"Yes, yes, then to pass on," replied Vanderhaan with a painful smile. "For us there is no wagon in the world, Crabetje, except our shop scales, which, alas! are but little in use. Here is the wagon, Crabetje, and here it passes on!"

"No, my good Vanderhaan, it is turning round; and, true as I live it stops before our house!" exclaimed Crabetje, with astonishment. And there, some one is getting out—a large stately man! Quick, my good Vanderhaan, open the door!"

The old Secretary did not think of attending to this suggestion, for he was by far too much overcome by the event of a wagon stopping before his door. Meanwhile the door was opened from without and the large, stately man, of whom Crabetje had spoken, stepped hastily into the little shop.

"Good evening, Mynheer Vanderhaan! good evening Liese Crabetje, and happy Christmas!" he exclaimed, greeting the astonished couple, whilst he extended his hand to both. "Haste! hat on, cloak on! You must quickly step into the wagon and go with me!"

"Whither? to whom, Mynheer?" stammered Vanderhaan, quite confused.

"To some one who will be glad to see you—to an old friend."

"Pah! We have no friends," replied the old Secretary. "Besides we cannot leave the shop alone."

"Why not?"

"Because customers may come!"

"Customers? They will have to go elsewhere But what is your whole stock of wares worth?"

"Well, five or six ducats, is it not so, Crabetje?"

"Here are ten, old Mr. Vanderhaan!" said the stranger, as he drew the money from his pocket and threw it on the table. "Now your whole stock is mine, and now—forward!"

"But, Mynheer who are you?" asked Vanderhaan, trembling at such extravagance and generosity.

"That will reveal itself! Suppose me to be Knecht Ruprecht, who puts great and small children into his bag! Only be in a hurry! Come!"

"Yes, yes, only come on, my good Vanderhaan,"

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said Crabetje, who had meanwhile surveyed the stranger with a sharp, searching glance. "Do you not know our visitor? Ah, I am not so easily deceived by a long beard, and a brown face. PETER HEMSKERK, you are welcome, and God bless you!"

"Peter!" exclaimed Vanderhaan. "Peter Hemskerk, the son of the coachman! Can it be possible, is it possible! Is it really you, sir?"

"Yes, yes, the same old Peter, since Crabetje has at any rate already recognised my silly face," he answered, smiling. "But now, quick! Somebody is waiting for us!"

"Merciful God, I can imagine who!" exclaimed Vanderhaan. "Crabetje 'where Peter is, Jonathan is not far off!'"

"That says nothing," answered Peter, smiling. "Only—forward!"

They resisted no longer, but with trembling haste cast a few pieces of clothing over themselves, then stepped into the wagon, which rattled away. It stopped at the hotel where Jonathan lodged. Peter led his guests into a dark room. "Wait here a few minutes," said he, and departed. Vanderhaan and Crabetje, in the highest state of expectation, sank on a sofa, and Crabetje sighed from a heart overburdened with joy: "Wonder of wonders! Just this very day, on the dear Christmas festival, such a surprise! Who, an hour ago, would have thought this, my good Vanderhaan?"

The old Secretary made no reply. The surprise had rendered him entirely helpless and speechless.

At the same hour, perhaps a little earlier, at which the wagon arrived at the door of the little shop in the suburb, a second wagon stopped before the stately house on the market, which years ago

had belonged to old Mr. Monkenwyk, and in which Jonathan had spent the first happy years of his youth. Two men stepped out, and desired without delay to see David Mappel, as they had business of the greatest importance to transact with him. They were announced and admitted. In the room into which they were led, were David Mappel and his nephew Philip.

"You wish to see me on business?" asked the first. "It must be a very important matter which brings you here so late and on Christmas-eve."

"Very important, sir!" repeated one of the men. "And we must even request you to follow us with your nephew."

"To go with you? Whither?"

"To the man, who desires to settle with you."

"Foolish!" exclaimed Mr. David Mappel, fretfully. "Where is the man? Let him come to me!"

"He desires your presence at *his* residence! Follow us thither. A vehicle awaits you at the door."

"Never!" exclaimed Mappel, angrily. "What nonsense!"

"Will you not go with us, sir?"

"No, and a thousand times no!"

"Then you *must!*" replied the stranger emphatically, throwing his mantle back a little, which revealed his uniform. "You recognize me?" he continued, as Mr. Mappel drew back confounded. "I am Lieutenant of the Police in this city, and this man here is my sergeant. Besides, here is a warrant which allows us to deliver you, if we wish, immediately at the prison. Will you now go with us?"

"I will go," replied Mr. Mappel, as pale as death. "But at whose instigation is this warrant made out?"

"You will find that out. And now—I must ask you to move!"

Pale and trembling, the two Mappels obeyed the police lieutenant, and stepped into the wagon, which drove away towards the hotel where Jonathan lodged. Like Vanderhaan and Crabetje, they were led into a dark room, and here left to their own thoughts. The lieutenant of the police withdrew from the room, carefully locking the door behind him, and went into another, brightly illuminated, where Jonathan awaited his arrival.

"Ha! are they here? Did they come without resistance?"

"Without resistance; but, very naturally, with great reluctance," replied the Lieutenant.

"All the same, if they are only here!" said Jonathan. "The others must also be here. Here they are already! I hear the wagon! Right—it stops."

Two minutes later Peter entered.

"Well?" asked Jonathan.

"All right!" was the answer. "But some one must deceive old Crabetje! She recognized me, Jonathan; and very naturally she and Vanderhaan expect now to find you also."

"It makes no difference, Peter! A quarter of an hour earlier or later. They must and shall make the discovery at any rate. Hence we may begin the distribution."

"I see nothing further to hinder."

"Quickly, then; we will not make them wait long."

They moved a large table into the midst of the room, spread a white cloth over it, and Peter brought a monstrous large sugar-tree with a hundred wax lights, from an adjoining room, and placed it on the table. Then the right and the left side of the table were spread with various articles; complete suits of clothes for Vanderhaan and Crabetje, a multitude of beautiful notions; and two little chests, each of which was filled with a hundred ducats, were prominently placed. When all things had been arranged, Jonathan placed the burning lamps on a second table to one side, on which lay various writing utensils, and said: "So far, all right. Bring the Mappels in, Sir Lieutenant."

A side door was opened, the lieutenant of the police made a sign, and the two Mappels entered into the room, with bewildered and astonished gaze, examining their surroundings and the two men before them.

"Draw this way, Mynheers David and Philip Mappel," said Jonathan. "Do you recognize me?"

"Jonathan Monkenwyk!" stammered David Mappel, pale as death, and compelled to be supported on the back of a chair to keep from sinking on the floor, while Philip was looking round for some way of escape, but met only the sharp eye of the Lieutenant of the Police, who at the same time slyly showed him the barrel of a pistol.

"Yes, Jonathan Monkenwyk," said Jonathan with a firm voice. "The eye of fear sees sharply, as I perceive. David Mappel, I have come to render reward and to take from you the unrighteous gains which you, through rascality, and at my expense, have gathered to yourself."

"It is not true, I deny it all!" exclaimed Mappel in extraordinary fright, whilst his pale forehead was covered with large drops of sweat.

Jonathan smiled derisively. "Do you see this?" said he, and threw down before him the confession of Notary Seybel.

David Mappel read, fell fainting on a chair, and moaned: "I am lost!"

"Yes, you are lost and completely in my power," said Jonathan. "You see and realize this?"

"I acknowledge it! Mercy, mercy, Mynheer Monkenwyk!" exclaimed Mappel pitifully, and fell on his knees.

"Mercy? And what mercy was shown me when I, as a beggar, was thrust out of my father's house, and was by this one, Philip, insulted and injured in person?"

"Mercy, mercy, sir!" exclaimed Philip also, and with uplifted hands in prayer, sank before Jonathan, on his knees, like his uncle.

"Enough! rise up!" said Jonathan. "Sign these papers, Mr. Mappel. Here is a confession of your guilt, and of the property stolen from me! Here—write!"

David Mappel rose agitated, and with trembling hand signed his name to the document. "Now I am a beggar," he muttered as he finished.

"You are yet lower than a beggar," replied Jonathan, severely. "You owe me besides, the proceeds which during twelve years the property has yielded, and which you have appropriated to your own use unrighteously. But of this hereafter. Stand here! Peter, kindle the lights on the Christmas tree, and then call in the rest. *Their* joy shall be the more a punishment to *these!*"

Peter did it. The Christmas tree cast a flood of light throughout the room; and now Peter flung open the door into another side room.

"Vanderhaan! Crabetje! come!" he called with a loud voice, and both came with a hasty bound as if they were still children to whom Christmas presents were to be distributed. But they had no eyes for the Christmas tree and the table; only for Jonathan their quick eyes searched, and with an outcry of ecstacy they fell upon his neck, when with a keen glance they had spied him out from the rest in the room.

"I observe that the eye of faithful attachment and love also sees sharply!" said Jonathan, smiling, whilst he returned the greetings of his old friends. "But here, Vanderhaan! Here, good Crabetje! Do you not see that here are Christmas presents for you?"

They saw well enough, but did not yet wish to see—did not wish to see anything but their young friend, who stood so fresh and blooming before them. On the two Mappels, who stood there with their sinful faces, they also cast a few stolen glances of wonder, but the next second they were again forgotten, and their eyes rested again on Jonathan, till he at length earnestly insisted that they must now also take a good look at the Christmas presents, which were intended for them. This was at last done; and now came fresh gushes of surprise and joy in view of the excellent things, and the many, many presents, and both thought finally that there was by far too much, and that Jonathan was only making sport with his old servants.

"Yes, sport, a good practical sport, you true-hearted souls!" said Jonathan. "And here is

something more, Vanderhaan! And also for you, Crabetje!"

He gave to each one a paper. When they read it, both trembled with joy, and cast a second glance at the Mappels, who also trembled, but for fear and dread, and perhaps also from envy.

"What!" exclaimed Vanderhaan. "I Chief Book-keeper with Monkenwyk and Company?"

"And I Chief House-keeper with Monkenwyk?" exclaimed the old Crabetje. "Do I dream? The old times are to return—the old times in the house of Monkenwyk?"

"In the same house, good Crabetje; replied Jonathan. "Mr. Mappel has had the goodness to give back to me the inheritance of my father."

"Ah!" said Vanderhaan. "Ah, I understand! The sun has brought everything into the light! God bless you, my dear young friend. And here's my hand; old Vanderhaan will be a faithful servant to you till the end of his life."

"And old Crabetje a good house-keeper!" said the good Liese with joyful countenance. "Fortune and blessing forever from above to the newly established house of Monkenwyk!"

Yes, this was a time of joy for the true and faithful old souls, a joy such as they had never hoped again to see. But this pleasurable intoxication had at length to grow calmer, and Peter thought again of the two Mappels, who stood confounded with shame in the darkest corner of the room; did not lift their eyes from the floor, and, alas!—*could not rejoice with them that were joyful.*

"What shall be done with them, Jonathan?" asked Peter. "You will not let your revenge go to the utmost? At least not on this evening,

Jonathan! Remember it is the holy CHRISTMAS EVE!"

Jonathan smiled mildly. "Peter," said he, "do you really suppose that I could practice *revenge* on this evening, after I have refreshed my heart and soul in the joyful company of the good? No, Peter, may they be forgiven; for I only sought RESTITUTION! Go!" he said, turning towards the two Mappels. "Go! You are free; and I demand of you no further satisfaction. Depart—and peace be with you!"

"O, the good Jonathan!" exclaimed old Vanderhaan. "He speaks as the angel of God, that came in that blessed night of salvation. 'Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people! For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men!'"

"Amen!" said Peter; and the Mappels, deeply humbled, sneaked away!

How long Jonathan and Peter, old Vanderhaan and Crabetje enjoyed themselves together, talking over old and new times, on that glorious Christmas—I have not been able to learn. But so much they said afterwards, that a more beautiful Christmas festival no one certainly had ever seen, than the one enjoyed on this blessed Christmas evening, which witnessed at once the reward of the good, and of the evil!

THE END.

1855. *1875.*

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of all, however, their unwavering trust in Him who holds the destinies of all in His hands never failed them, and they accordingly experienced what may be truly termed miraculous deliverances. The translation is most happily executed, and the mechanical part of the work is such, also, as to commend it to favor."—*Reformed Messenger, Phila.*

"Franz Hoffmann's writings, in the original German, are deservedly popular. Their moral tendency is good, while they are highly entertaining. They are well worthy of the effort that is now made in different directions to clothe them in an English dress, for the benefit of the English community."—*Reformed Messenger, Phila.*

HOFFMANN, THE AUTHOR OF

ANTON, THE FISHERMAN.

BY REV. T. STORK, D. D.

We announced last week, the publication of "Anton the Fisherman," by the Lutheran Board of Publication. Before speaking of the book, we wish to say something about the author—Alex. Friedr. Franz Hoffmann, of Dresden. In his early life he was a bibliopolist in Bernberg. But, soon weary of the mere mercantile handling of books, and following his literary tendencies, he spent some time in Halle, and attended a course of lectures on philosophy and physical science. He subsequently removed to Dresden, and began his literary career with an adaptation of the "*Thousand and One Nights*," for the young, which, with a few original stories, met with such universal favor, that he afterward devoted himself to popular literature, with special reference to the young. Since 1840, he has published more than a hundred differ-

ent stories, legends, etc., all of which reached several editions, and many have been translated. He has, also, published since 1846, the "*Deutschen Jugen Freund*," one of the very best periodicals of its kind. The amount of his literary labor seems almost incredible to an American. But we remember another great writer of fiction, who, after the age of fifty-six, produced thirty volumes in three years. Hoffmann has something of the genius and energy of Scott. When Scott began to break down from his great labors, Mr. Abercrombie implored him to desist from writing: "I tell you what it is, Doctor," said Scott, "when Molly puts the kettle on, you might as well say, don't boil."

Hoffmann is among the most favorite of the almost innumerable story-tellers of Germany. Our first acquaintance with him was made in this "Anton, the Fisherman." The first three chapters were read to us from the manuscript by the translator. We were charmed. At first we thought a good deal of the interest we felt might be attributable to the reader, for there is something in the reading of a woman of culture and sensibility — the tremulous intonations of the voice, and the peculiar heart-emphasis — that always affects us; but a subsequent perusal of the story confirmed our first impressions of its exquisite beauty.

This Anton is a narrative of humble life. It has variety of character and incident, without complexity or affectation; it pictures domestic sorrow the most afflictive, without overstepping the modesty of nature, or the simplicity of truth. The incidents are not only beautiful, but probable. They are such as might occur in any common life. The spirit of the narrative is not only moral, but religious. And yet the story has no formal moral for its end, which is always the case in a true work of art. The moral should be in the spirit of purity and power with which it acts, and so in this story of Anton you may make *manifold* moral uses of it. One of the most difficult things for writers of fiction,

is to give a true ideal of childhood, as any one can see by recalling the Mignone of Gœthe, the Fenella of Scott, the little Nell of Dickens. We do not say that Hoffmann has stood this test of genius; but in Louisa he has given us a child that is morally most beautiful and winsome, that reminds one of Hawthorne's Pearl, "who seems to have lost her pathway out of heaven, and found herself on earth, smiling with the sweetness of higher spheres, yet sombre also with the melancholy of this lower world."

Altogether, this story, in its religious tone and influence, as well as a work of art, is far above most of the current literature of our Sunday Schools. For there is a good deal written for this department, that is not much better than the brain-sick stories for namby-pamby magazines, and in which the young would find it as difficult to get any true idea of religion, as it would be to study finance in the tale of Aladdin, or to learn geography in Gulliver's Travels. We will only add, that the translation is in pure and fluent English, with the graceful touch of a woman of culture and refinement; and our Superintendent has given us the book in a form and style of beauty that must win universal admiration.

"Blessings," says Sancho, "on the man that first invented sleep—it comes round one like a cloak, and covers him all over." Blessings, we say, on the man that invented fiction. Blessings on all genuine story-tellers. Blessings on those who have enlarged the domain of the ideal, who call new inhabitants into this empire, with whom it is pleasant, as well as profitable, to be acquainted, who, while they minister to innocent pleasure, improve the heart.—*Lutheran Observer, Phila.*

Sharon Centre, O., April 29, 1870.

"I received two small volumes from your establishment. They are very tasty and carefully gotten up, and the stories are quite interesting, not only to children, but even to older persons.

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